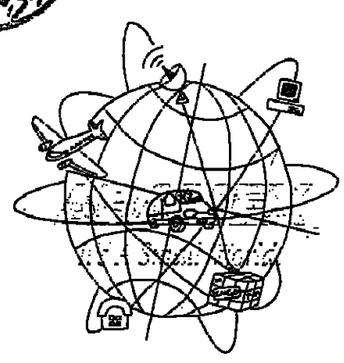
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اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

Kabariti cabinet reflects new style of Government

By Raed Al Abed
Star Staff Writer

THE SPEED with which Prime Minister Abdel Karim Kabariti was able to form his first Government this week has surprised many. But more importantly it was the nature of his 31-member cabinet, comprising 22 deputies, technocrats and even figures known for their opposition of the peace treaty with Israel, that baffled observers. This was no ordinary Government by any standard and if anything, Mr Kabariti's distinctive leadership style was evident.

"The important question is: What is my role in this Government," Dr Kamal Naser, the new Minister of Administrative Development told *The Star*. "Mr Kabariti agreed that he will give me a free hand to fight corruption. And he emphasized the notions of administrative reforms and man-power development," Dr Naser said. "I am happy with this assignment, and will work to find a mechanism to fight corruption, and prevent it from happening," he added. "Our main concern is local problems, more than external issues."

The independent pan-Arabist, who until his appointment was president of the Jordanian Lawyers Association, is also a member of the Anti-normalization Committee of the Professional Associations.

"Our position from the peace treaty has no value now, since the treaty is already signed. During the last two cabinet meetings no minister talked about it," Dr Naser said. "Every minister has his agenda, the most important thing now, more important than talking about politics, is administrative development and I will be busy reviewing the ministry's success of the the past year."

Asked if he will be willing to meet with Israeli officials, Dr Naser said that he was part of this cabinet and head of a ministry. "We form one unit, there should be no problems there. It is early to talk about this, when it happens we shall see," he said.

Surprisingly, another opponent of the peace treaty also joined the new cabinet. Leftist deputy Mustafa Shneikat was appointed Minister of Agriculture. How he feels about the Government's political agenda is still unknown.



Kabariti's transparent cabinet

"This cabinet has been given a difficult task by His Majesty the King. It has been asked to carry out dramatic changes in almost every aspect of life in our country," said Ibrahim Izzedin, a former deputy prime minister who resigned his post in the previous Sharif (Prince) Zeid Ben Shaker's Government.

"There are many things that I would like to emphasize, like the necessity of reform of our educational system, and the stress on administrative reform," he told *The Star*. "The Government must activate the opportunities for investment and promote Jordan in a manner which would help to open up the country for meaningful investment. At the same time, emphasis must be placed on enhancing democracy in the country," he added.

Jordanian businessmen were happy with the emphasis in the the Royal letter of designation on the need to activate the role of the private sector in economic and political decisions. "We are comfortable with the new Prime Minister who comes from the private sector," said Hamdi Taba'a, chairman of the Jordanian Businessmen Association. "Other cabinet ministers are experienced and should affect the process of economic reform. This should make our dialogue with the Government much easier."

The present Government has 22 deputies, five more than the previous one.

Mr Izzedin considers this as "normal in a Parliamentary democracy." He added "governments in democratic countries usually come from parliaments, and the cabinet represents the main parties and blocs in Parliament. This

Continued on page 2

How the Government was formed

By Hamdan Al Hajj
Special to The Star

PRIME MINISTER Abdel Karim Kabariti's new Government is not expected to face immediate domestic opposition as His Majesty King Hussein has made sure that the new premier has ideal conditions under which to carry out his duties. As a result, Mr Kabariti will not find it difficult to focus his attention on achieving the targets set by His Majesty in his letter of designation.

From the onset, the King has made sure that his designated Prime Minister carried out his consultations with all Parliamentary groups from a strong position. He did so by removing all obstacles that could hinder Mr Kabariti's efforts to form a harmonious cabinet.

The King surprised many by discharging his close advisors including Chief of the Royal Court Marwan Al Qasem and appointing a man who is very close to Kabariti, Dr Awn Al Khasawneh. The King removed other advisors including Yanal Hikmat and Mohammed Rasoul Al Kilani. Having pacified the Royal Court, the King then gave Kabariti full authority to recruit a strong, able and young cabinet.

While Kabariti was busy forming his Government, the King continued his campaign of dismissals, appointing a new chief of the General Intelligence Dept. Maj. Gen. Samih Battikhi, who is also a close associate of Kabariti.

Thus by the time the young Prime Minister was ready to announce his cabinet, his lines of communications to the King, whether through the Royal Court or the General Intelligence, were open.

The rest is in Kabariti's hand. His relationship with fellow members of the Lower House is outstanding as is evident from the number and background of the deputies he recruited. The Speaker of the Lower House, Sa'ad Hail Srour and Kabariti belong to the same bloc, the Democratic Parliamentary Bloc. It is thought that Srour was a key architect of Kabariti's cabinet. With 22 deputies in his 30 member cabinet, Kabariti's Government will receive a strong vote of confidence, with no less than 55 votes.

The first thing that Kabariti did after receiving the Royal letter of designation was to visit Srour at his home late on Thursday. Together the two men drafted the general sketches of the forthcoming cabinet.

Kabariti's political wits went to work soon after. He cleverly chose to first consult with the IAF parliamentary bloc at the Royal Court, with the participation of the IAF secretary general, on the composition of the new Government.

The talks were warm and Deputy Dr Mohammed Oweideh of the IAF said after leaving the meeting that "this Government will be better than its predecessor," and that the new Prime Minister exchanged views with the IAF in a genuine and sincere manner.

While Kabariti could not get the IAF's vote of confidence, he was promised that the Islamists would avoid unnecessary confrontations with his Government.

IAF spokesman Deputy Hamzeh Mansour promised the new Prime Minister to open a new chapter of relations. Deputy Oweideh said the tension that dominated relations with the outgoing Government had gone.

Other opposition members of Parliament also expressed satisfaction with the new Government. Deputy Toujan Faisal, who was consulted by Kabariti, praised the new Prime Minister. Former Prime Minister Deputy Taher Masri said the situation had changed, though the road will not furnished with roses for the new cabinet.

He added that Mr Kabariti has many things to take into consideration in order to overcome the difficulties which may arise. Masri said Kabariti will still have to deal with the issue of democracy, public freedoms, and investment.

The Royal Palace did not have much time to look for a new political figure who is capable of translating into deeds King Hussein's vision for Jordan at this stage. Prince Zeid Bin Shaker repeated his wish to be released from his duties. The King met at length with Kabariti on 25 January, made up his mind on 1 February, designated him on 2 February and issued the letter on 4 February, the same day of the formation of the new cabinet.

The King allowed Kabariti a week for consultations with parliamentary groups. However, as news of the resignation of Prince Zeid and the designation of Kabariti spread among Parliamentary and public circles, it became impossible to continue these consultations.

The endorsement of the resignation of the former Government and the formation of a new one had to be finalized before Prince Zeid's departure for London on Monday. ■

Balata underdogs get a voice in new Palestinian council

World Report

By Mary Curtius
LA Times-Washington Post News Service

BALATA, West Bank—This sprawling maze of concrete and corrugated tin, the largest refugee camp in the West Bank and vanguard of Palestinian armed resistance to Israeli military rule, boasts a new honor: this despised home of the disenfranchised has produced three members of the newly elected Palestinian self-governing council.

Not only is Balata home to a surprising number of winning candidates, but two were underfunded underdogs given little chance by political pundits; two were the youngest elected to the council; and one is among only five women elected to the 88-member body.

The victory of their native sons and daughter has made Balatans, normally a grim group, almost giddy.

At the homes of Kamel Afghani, Husam Khader and Dalal Salamah, the stream of well-wishers is endless, enthusiastic. The trio is expected to represent not only Balata but all refugees on a council that promises to give President Yasser Arafat more trouble than the Palestine National Council—the Palestinian parliament in exile—ever has.

No one expects a revolution against Arafat's leadership when he convenes the new council later this month. Master of Palestinian politics for three decades, Arafat will be backed on the council by 51 loyalists who captured seats after he named them to official slates of the Fatah faction that he founded. Eight other council members who ran as independents are considered Fatah loyalists.

None of the independents who are expected to oppose Arafat on key policies represents a party; some are Fatah rebels who are expected to oppose him on only a few issues.

But for the first time, Arafat will have to contend with opponents with a power base that is independent of his. They are eager to satisfy a constituency with a long list of demands, a constituency that gets to vote again in four years.

Besides the independents, "There are ... within Fatah, about 20 who might constitute a Fatah rebels' pool," said political analyst Khalil Shikaki, who does public opinion polling of Palestinians for a think tank in the West Bank city of Nablus. The opposition "will have a very strong voice in the debate. They will make the debate interesting."

The council members from Balata vow to keep up their camp's tradition of dissent—this time through politics practiced within their own government rather than through violence aimed at an occupying Israeli army.

They express reservations about amending the Palestinian charter that calls for Israel's destruction. They pledge to push Arafat to make tougher demands when he starts the next round of negotiations with Israel in May. And they say they will fight to ensure that Palestinian society is not patterned after the Arab world's autocratic regimes.

Both Kamel Afghani and Husam Khader played prominent roles in the Palestinian uprising that burst from the refugee camps of the Gaza Strip and West Bank in 1987 and succeeded in making Israel rethink the cost of its occupation.

Afghani led Fatah factions for all Nablus-area refugee camps during the Intifada. Arafat knocked his name and Khader's off the Fatah slate for the Nablus district because the two were seen as troublemakers too openly critical of Arafat's leadership.

Salamah, at 30 the youngest person elected to the council, is a different story. A veteran activist from Palestinian women's committees, she was the lone woman on Fatah's Nablus slate. But she carried her own handicaps into the campaign.

In a deeply traditional society, she was one of only a handful of women who even dared to seek office. Wearing the head scarf favored by observant Muslim women, she ventured into rural villages and campaigned hard throughout the district, speaking to separate audiences of men and women.

In interviews last week, Khader and Salamah said their years of fighting Israelis and observing Israeli democracy have affected them deeply and molded them into people unlikely to be easily silenced by the autocratic Arafat.

Both said they are determined to make the council a powerful institution in Palestinian society and in the upcoming negotiations with Israel on the final status of the Palestinian entity.

They expressed confidence that they will find enough like-minded council members to make a difference in disputes with Arafat over policy.

"This is a generation that grew up in the school of reality," Khader said. "It is the generation schooled in Israeli prisons, and it is unique in two ways: It was produced by struggle and affected by the democratic practice of the Israelis."

Salamah is more respectful than Khader of the leadership that came from outside the territories, saying she believes that there must be "continuity" between outsiders and insiders.

But, Salamah acknowledges, "Maybe the different structures of the PLO did not fulfill this need for democracy that our people have. Our role together is to implement democracy in all aspects of life now. We do not want decisions to be imposed from the top." ■

Le nationalisme arabe dans l'impasse

A LIRE p. 12 dans LE JOURDAIN

King visit to Saudi Arabia signifies a new chapter in relations

By Ahmed Shaker
Special to The Star

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein's forthcoming visit on Sunday to Saudi Arabia bears special significance. It is the first visit which the King pays to Saudi Arabia since the Gulf War five years ago, thus putting an end to tension in relations between the two countries.



Jordanian sources say the two monarchs will deal with need for bilateral cooperation in all fields, as they face common challenges.

Prime Minister Kabariti said earlier the two leaders will discuss the revival of joint committees. He commended Saudi policies in regard to Arab and Islamic issues, as well as the historic role of King Fahd.

Jordanian sources confirmed that the talks with the Saudi King, Crown Prince Abdullah, and top officials will concentrate on many issues, including economic, trade and cultural relations. The exchange of visits between officials of the two countries will be agreed upon to revive the already signed protocols and to sign new accords.

Other visits will be approved in the military and security fields. Both sides are determined to combat all forms of terror, and to exchange information on the forces of extremism.

The resumption of training Saudi Arabian officers in Jordanian schools and institutions will be finalized, and the possible operation of joint patrol squads on the borders will also be considered to combat smuggling, especially in drugs.

The peace process, which is fully supported by Saudi Arabia, will be another issue of discussion. In this regard, the two sides will stress the need to establish a durable and comprehensive peace on the Syrian-Lebanese-Israeli tracks and for measures to be taken to meet the requirements of the coming era.

The possibility for thousands of Jordanians to work in Saudi Arabia is expected to be discussed in detail.

The two sides will naturally discuss the issue of Iraq. Saudi Arabia and Jordan are in agreement over Iraq's territorial integrity and are against its division. They agree also that Iraq has to implement all UN resolutions, and emphasize the importance of the lifting of sanctions for the Iraqi people.

Preliminary information indicates that Saudi Arabia will advise Saudi financial institutions and the Islamic Development Bank to finance projects in Jordan, namely those being launched in the border areas such as Haql, and in the north eastern parts of Saudi Arabia which particularly deal with construction material.

King Hussein, who will be accompanied by Prime Minister Kabariti, Chief of the Royal Court Dr Awn Khasawneh, the Chief Chamberlain Prince Raad Ben Zeid, and other top officials will perform *Umra* in Mekkah.

On Wednesday the King will fly to Cairo to meet with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

Sources indicate that Saudi Arabia and Egypt will initiate a reconciliation process between Jordan and Kuwait. Signs of this have come from Kuwait and herald Kuwait's readiness to open a new chapter in relations with Jordan. Crown Prince Hassan has exchanged letters with the Kuwaiti Crown Prince Sheikh Saad Al Abdallah Al Sabah. Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad, brother of the emir, has for the first time sent a congratulatory message to Kabariti after having met him abroad when the latter was foreign minister.

There are also indications that Jordanian-Egyptian-Palestinian-Syrian meetings will take place in Cairo in April. These meetings may be preceded by others at the level of foreign ministers to prepare for a joint meeting of the four leaders to discuss the requisite of deepening peace in the region in light of the developments of negotiations between Israel and Syria. ■

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JORDAN WEEK

An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Awni Abu Ghosh

King's letter of designation: A mandate for Kabariti

■ **What follows are excerpts of the official translation of His Majesty King Hussein's letter of designation to the Prime Minister Abdel Karim Al Kabriti:**

My decree requires that the cabinet consist of elements that are young, sincere, virtuous, honest, loyal, and capable of working as one team, and bearing the collective responsibility of building a strong Jordan. I pray to God that your new cabinet should work to mobilize all energies, and draw its pulse from the people.

The first of these objectives is to preserve and consolidate the unity of the nation and of all Jordanians.

The second objective is to consolidate our progress towards democracy and responsible freedom.

The third objective is to make a review of our progress in general, to realize a comprehensive corrective leap.

To conduct a review of all state apparatus which have deteriorated because of the absence of a role for the private sector.

The youth are the reserve for the future, and the true wealth of this country. Their energy must be mobilized and channeled to consolidate their sense of belonging to their country.

We must open the road for the capable and efficient among our youth to progress in all fields, to achieve an efficient state apparatus.

We must open the road for the capable and efficient among our youth to progress in all fields, to achieve an efficient state apparatus.

We must work constantly to improve the situation of teachers and schools, so that education can evolve from the state of teaching and learning by heart to that of interaction with laboratories and computers, universities must be allowed to set for themselves the criteria for enrollment of their students, which would guarantee that the best and most capable will be qualified. In accordance with the country's need for these qualifications, I believe strongly that we suffer from an imbalance in the labor market. It is inconceivable that Jordan should accommodate a number of immigrant labourers greater than that of unemployed Jordanians.

We have remarked over the past years that the method of agriculture and marketing make land a burden on its owner rather than a source of income as it should be, so that he may cherish it like his lifeblood.

We must also rid ourselves of the stifling bureaucratic routine in state institutions. We must eliminate all manifestations of nepotism and corruption wherever they may be found, while keeping aware that much of what is spread about the existence of such practices is the work of some who seek to disfigure the image of the country, to malign it, and undermine its achievements.

We wish to to express our pride in the judicial system of Jordan, and to assert our constant care to safeguard its independence, to raise its efficiency, and to provide peace of mind in all its forms to all who work in it.

We also wish to express our pride in our security services, which we have founded on basis of virtue, high morality, and concerns for the security of the country and its citizens. We wish to form, within the apparatus of the public security and the Ministry of Interior, offices for internal control to supervise the performance of these agencies to maintain discipline.

Our foreign policy has always been, and will stay, founded on a broad base of international legitimacy, embodied by our respected for the objectives and the rules of the United Nations Charter.

Ministers for the first time

■ The new cabinet of Abdul Karim Al Kabariti has 16 ministers who are entering the Governme nt for the first time. They are: Abdul Hadi Al Majali, Hamad Abu Jamoos, Munir Sober, Abd El Hafeth Al Shakhanbeh, Mifleh Al Ruhimi, Ahmed Al Qudah, Mustapha Shneikat, Mahmood Hwaimel, and Mohammad Dawodia. These are all deputies. Other ministers from outside Parliament are Mohammad Awdi Njadat, Munther Al Masri, Marwan Awad, Khalid Al Madadha, Kamal Nasser and Nasser Al Lawzi.



Al Kabariti

The new Prime Minister took deputies from four parliamentary blocks: The National Action Front (NAF), National Front, the Democratic Parliamentary Coalition (DPC), and from other blocks. From the NAF, deputies included Abdul Hadi Al Majali, Hashem Al Dabbas and Mifleh Al Ruheimi. From the National Front block there are Mohammad Al Thweib and Mohammad Awdi Njadat. From the DPC, there is the Prime Minister himself, Hamad Abu Jamoos, Samir Qawar, Saleh Irsheidat, and Aref Al Batayneh. Mohamood Al Hwaimel is an independent/tribal. Mr Kabariti failed to convince the Islamic Action Front (IAF) to join his Government.

However, the IAF Secretary General said that his party would adopt a more cooperative stance towards the Government. It is understood that the IAF wants change in the new draft electoral law that was proposed in the final days of Sharif (now Prince) Zeid Ben Shaker's Government. Mr Kabariti promised that he would look at the draft law again. Abed Al Razzak Tbeishat becomes the new Minister of Municipal, Rural and Environmental Affairs. Although he is an independent Islamist, it is unlikely that his appointment was made to appease the IAF.

Changes at the top

■ Changes also occurred in the Royal Court. Many of His Majesty the King's advisors have retired. These include Yanal Hikmat, Mohammad Rasul Al Kilani and Chief of the Royal Court Marwan Al Qassim who was awarded the Al Nahda Medal of the First Order. Dr Awn Al Khasawneh, an experienced diplomat, is the new Chief of the Royal Court. Political observers say his appointment will mean greater cooperation between the Royal Court and the Prime Ministry's office. Mr Khasawneh, a one time advisor to the King and HRH Prince Hassan is also a close friend of the Prime Minister Mr Kabariti. On another level, Mustapha Al Qaissi, the head of the General Intelligence Dept. now becomes the new National Security Advisor and a rapporteur to the State Security Council. Maj. Gen. Samieh Al Batikhi takes over as the new head of Intelligence.



Khasawneh

Prince Zeid

■ Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker has been given the title of Prince by King Hussein. Traditionally Princes have never formed or entered a government and it seems more than likely that Prince Zeid will now quit politics for good. Prince Zeid is an army man, being the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces. However since 1989, he has devoted his time fully to politics, first by becoming the Chief of the Royal Court, and then by heading many Governments, the last of which was in January 1995.



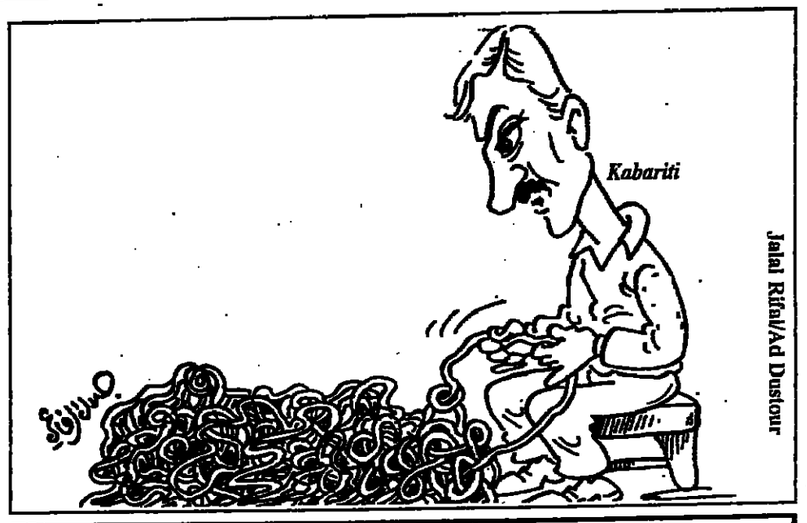
Prince Zeid

A different face-lift

■ The Government this time has a truly different face-lift. Called a cabinet of the younger generation by King Hussein, the Government has more dynamic figures. Besides the Prime Minister himself who is only 48, we have the youngest Minister of Information, Dr Marwan Al Muasher, and the Minister of Transport Mr Nassir Al Lawzi. But a number of other ministers also have that dynamic touch. Dr Rima Khalaf (Planning), and Mr Ali Abu Ragheb (Trade and Industry) have been kept on for their personal qualities to move the country forward at this critical period. In this endeavour, they are joined by Mr Marwan Awad as the new Minister of Finance. Mr Awad, who is a banker that worked at the Central Bank and at the Ministry of Industry and Trade, has an extensive knowledge of financial affairs. Besides its younger character, the government has much more liberal traits. The appointment of Kamal Nassir, the former President of the Lawyers Association, as Minister of Administrative Development is an encouraging sign that the Government means business. His hands will be full, since King Hussein in his designation letter to Mr Kabariti stressed the need for administrative reform, and the need to fight malpractice and corruption in the bureaucracy. Mustapha Shneikat has been made Minister of Agriculture. Shneikat, a leftist deputy, is a firm supporter of the rights of peasants in the Jordan Valley and he is likely to move to improve their plight.

Jordanians of Palestinian origin

■ There are five Jordanians of Palestinian origin in this cabinet. They are Dr Rima Khalaf who was actually born in Kuwait in 1953, Mr Mohammad Al Thweib (Parliamentary Affairs), born near Bethlehem in 1941, Munther Al Masri (Minister of Education), born in Nablus in 1935, Marwan Awad (Finance), born in Jerusalem in 1951 and Dr Kamal Naser (Administrative Development) who was born in Ramin near Tulkarim in 1944.



Committee for forthcoming conference on Jordan-Japanese relations to be formed

■ A Jordanian National Committee (JNC) is to be set up to prepare for the upcoming Conference on Jordanian-Japanese Relations and the Japan Festival in Jordan in June. This was one of the last acts of the now former Prime Minister Prince Zeid Ben Shaker. The Committee will be headed by Dr Mazen Armouti, advisor to His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, and President of the Institute of Diplomacy.

The Committee includes the Secretary-General of each of the Ministries of Culture, Planning, Tourism, Information, and Foreign Affairs, the Director-General of the Department of Provisions and Supplies at the Ministry of Finance, the Jordanian Ambassador to Japan, Vice-President of the University of Jordan for Academic Affairs, Public Relations Executive Assistant at Royal Jordanian, Mr Muneeb Tukan, Director-General of the Business Bank, Mr Wasif Azar, the President of the Amman Chamber of Commerce Mr Haidar Murad, Director of Jordan TV, Mr Naser Joudeh and Dr Zaki Ayyubi, member of the Jordanian-Japanese Friendship Association.

In co-operation and co-ordination with a Japanese National Committee set up for the same purpose, the JNC will supervise the Jordanian contribution to the Conference on Jordanian-Japanese relations in related economic, information, cultural, scientific, and tourist activities within the framework of the Japan Festival in Jordan.

The Japan Festival in Jordan comes as a fruit of the success of the Jordan Week in Japan held in May 1995 under the patronage of Prince Hassan and HRH Princess Sarvath. The Week coincided with the holding of a comprehensive conference in Tokyo addressing Jordanian-Japanese relations and relevant future prospects. The conference came out with the Tokyo Declaration, a binding commitment from both sides to co-operate in all areas, enhancing bilateral relations between the two states.

The new cabinet

1. **Abdul Karim Alawi Kabariti — Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Defence;**
2. **Abdullah Ensour — Minister of Higher Education;**
3. **Awad Khleifat — Minister of Interior;**
4. **Abdul Hadi Al Majali — Minister of Public Works and Housing;**
5. **Abdul Karim Al Dughmi — Minister of Justice;**
6. **Jamal Saraireh — Minister of Post and Communications;**
7. **Samir Kawar — Minister of Water and Irrigation;**
8. **Ali Abul Al Ragheb — Minister of Industry and Trade;**
9. **Saleh Irsheidat — Minister of Tourism and Antiquities;**
10. **Abdul Razzaq Tbeishat — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment;**
11. **Aref Bataineh — Minister of Health;**
12. **Abdul Salam Al Abbadi — Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs;**
13. **Rima Khalaf-Hneidi — Minister of Planning;**
14. **Hashem Dabbas — Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources;**
15. **Mohammad Thweib — Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs;**
16. **Hisham Al Tal — Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs;**
17. **Hammad Abu Jamous — Minister of Social Development;**
18. **Munir Sobar — Minister of Supply;**
19. **Abdul Hafez Shakhanbeh — Minister of Labour;**
20. **Mufleh Rheimi — Minister of State;**
21. **Ahmad Qudah — Minister of Culture;**
22. **Mustafa Shneikat — Minister of Agriculture;**
23. **Mahmoud Abdul Latif Hweimel — Minister of State;**
24. **Mohammad Daoudieh — Minister of Youth;**
25. **Mohammad Odeh Njadat — Minister of Education;**
26. **Munther Al Masri — Minister of Education;**
27. **Marwan Awad — Minister of Finance;**
28. **Khalid Madadha — Minister of State for Foreign Affiars;**
29. **Marwan Muasher — Minister of Information;**
30. **Kamal Naser — Minister of administrative Development; and**
31. **Naser Al Lawzi — Minister of Transport.**

Kabariti cabinet

Continued from page 1

should be coupled by giving a chance to the permanent secretaries to run their departments without interference from the minister."

The private sector was not happy with the number of deputies in the new cabinet, especially those who have no experience in economic affairs. "We would have preferred them to stay in Parliament to discuss and observe Government policy," said Taba'a.

"Is this Government, with its huge number of ministers, capable of being flexible and of moving fast on the economic issues?" he asked.

"We fear that debate in the Prime Ministry will be endless because of the number of Cabinet members. This is something that delays the process of adopting economic decisions."

Mr Izzedin, who is considered a liberal and an advocate of press freedom called on the new Government to "give a direct message in relation to the freedom of the press and to open up the official media to the opposition and be forthcoming in its debate with political parties."

He said such signals will create the right atmosphere for "a meaningful dialogue between political activists and the Government in the country."

Mr Kabariti's Government will be judged by its position from administrative reform, the educational system and inviting investors among others. The Prime Minister has instructed his team to be accessible. During the first cabinet meeting this week, Mr Kabariti called for a transparent Government where ministers and public officials are held accountable. Mr Izzedin applauded such a directive.

The opposition has welcomed the new cabinet, while reiterating its rejection of the peace treaty with Israel.

The Muslim Brotherhood refused to join the Government, but said that its members will cooperate with any Government that respects public liberties and *Shura*.

"We rejected the participation as we believe that the present era is based on cooperating with the Jewish enemy," said Abdel Majid Thuneibat, the overseer of the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Jordan. "There is no difference between this Government and the previous one—it might succeed in some fields, but there are important issues like unemployment, poverty, economic crises and public liberties, which we hope this Government will address."

Mr Salem Al Nahas, the general secretary of the leftist Hashd party, was more blunt. "This Government was expected. The decision-makers discovered that there is a barrier between the people and the peace treaty, at a time when the treaty has become the cornerstone of the political system." Al Nahas, whose party faces legal charges of affiliation to a foreign party, that "this why the leadership found no alternative but to turn its back to the old guard and seek younger politicians who will carry on with normalization."

Criticizing the two opposition figures whom Kabariti was able to win over to his team, Al Nahas said that by joining the Government and adhering to its program, they have ceased to be members of the opposition.

The General Secretary of the Jordanian Women's Union, lawyer Asma Khader said "the policies of the state are basically the same. The policy towards Iraq, the implementation of the peace treaty and the reconciliation with the Gulf states should continue under the Kabariti Government," she said.

But in her view, the structure of the cabinet was designed so that the public could let off steam. "But the crises will erupt again, especially concerning democratic freedoms," Khader said.

She expressed her doubts about the Government's ability to deliver, describing it as a Government of deputies who became ministers, rather than a parliamentary Government. ■

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People & Politics

Kabariti: Open mandate

What happened this week in Amman was a major overhaul of the political machinery that has governed the Kingdom for years—truly a white revolution. The choice of Abdel Karim Kabariti as Prime Minister, the youngest in Jordan's history, represents a serious change in the perception and outlook of the Palace with regard to the function of Government in Jordan. For years now, Government heads hailed from an almost closed club of veteran statesman whose appointment was based largely on tactical rather than strategic objectives. But the 47-year-old Kabariti comes from what could be described as third generation Jordanian politicians. He is yet to prove that he is a statesman. His 31-member cabinet has familiar faces and new ones too. The 22 deputies who joined his cabinet, now dubbed as the first parliamentary Government in recent history, should allow Mr Kabariti a fairly easy dealing with the Lower House. In that sense he has shown realism and pragmatism opting to appease the deputies rather than confront them.

But what is important about Mr Kabiriti's Government is the Royal mandate that it received to initiate total change in Jordan. The young premier has an impeccable reputation as a clean and honest public figure who joined the ranks of Government as an elected deputy, twice winning his Aqaba seat in general elections. Along with former Prime Minister Taher Al Masri, Kabariti is the second elected official to be appointed premier in the last four years.

Mr Kabariti's political fortunes began to change after Jordan concluded its peace agreement with Israel. As head of the Foreign Relations Committee at the Lower House he was seen as having contributed to the successful passage of the peace treaty in Parliament in late 1994. For that, he was handed the portfolio of the Foreign Ministry in the outgoing Prince (Sharif) Zaid Ben Shaker's Government, which was formed in January 1995. Mr Kabariti successfully carried out the sensitive task of restoring Jordan's relations with Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. He did so with considerable success especially with Saudi Arabia. But that mission was not accomplished without some sacrifices. Many Jordanians saw Mr Kabariti as working to distance Jordan from Iraq—an issue of special concern to Jordanian industrialists and businessmen. His harsh remarks against Iraq echoed those of His Majesty King Hussein who is keen to maintain Jordan's weight and influence in the region as the peace process digs root.

Mr Kabariti's Government will undoubtedly excel in improving Jordan's foreign relations, especially with Israel, the United States, Europe and the Gulf states. Mr Kabariti opted to keep the Foreign Affairs portfolio to himself. But the "total change" challenge that the King has called for requires more work on the home front. It is here that the US educated Kabariti will face daunting challenges. Reviving the national economy, dealing with the endemic problems of unemployment, poverty, falling standard of living among others, requires a little more than good intentions and political acumen.

Perhaps the biggest challenge facing Mr Kabariti today is to redefine the role of the public sector and streamline the government. This awesome task was shunned by his predecessors because it often meant colliding with special interest groups whether amongst the tribes, the constituencies or the big businesses.

Mr Kabariti moved fast to assure the press, professional associations and political parties that he is not seeking confrontation. That was a good move on his part. He is already succeeded in giving the impression that his Government will be a liberal, open, transparent and democratic one. But critics, and surely this Government will have its share of them, have decided that Mr Kabariti has no stereotyped political convictions of his own. He is not a Baathist, a pan-Arabist, a Nasserite, nor is he known for his Islamist leanings. May be this should be to his credit. He speaks of generalities; preserving Arab unity and safeguarding Jordan's pan-Arab role. So far he did not have to make ideological alliances with any distinctive group. In the future he may have to do so.

But in the real world there are no fairy tales and like all politicians Mr Kabariti will have foes. The honeymoon could last for a couple of months, but there will be those in the old guard who will love to see Mr Kabariti fail. He is already seen as having stepped on too many toes, at the Royal Court among other places, to get to where he is now. Whether he can muster the survival instinct that every politician dreams of having is a matter of time. There are those who will make comparisons with Mr Masri's Government, which was forced out after only six month in office. Mr Kabariti will be the first to dismiss such allusions. We hope he's right.

A nice man at the MOI

The choice of Dr Marwan Muasher as Minister of Information in the new Kabariti Government is a welcome step. Dr Muasher is seen by Jordanian journalists more of a colleague than a minister—having been a regular columnist for the *Jordan Times* for many years back in 1980s. Those who dealt with him know him as a western oriented intellectual, and as open minded in his thinking and approach.

So what's a nice man like him doing at the Ministry of Information? Good question. We hope Dr Muasher will not have to shed his liberal attire and chase after the "renegade" press with a big stick. Nor do we want him to yield to pressure to revise the press law in favor of a backward one. In fact we hope Dr Muasher will embark on a great mission: That of writing himself out of a job. There are good arguments today, under this Government, to abolish the Ministry of Information altogether.

As recent as the outgoing Government, there were hints at transforming the Government-owned radio and television into a public corporation. The Press and Publication Dept. is already up to its head with work "regulating" the local press and "censoring" foreign publications. What's left for the Minister of Information to do? In the first few days since he assumed his job, Dr Muasher presented himself as the official Govetnment spokesman, holding a press conference after a cabinet meeting. Let's hope he will continue in this tradition. ■

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The Star

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Messages to 648-298



● His Majesty King Hussein visited the Royal Wings, the new airline company on Tuesday. King Hussein praised the airline and said that it will play a complementary role to Royal Jordanian. Royal Wings will provide shuttle services between the capitals of the region. Initially however, its Canadian built De Haviland Dash 8-300 plane will operate a twice-weekly flight between Amman and Tel Aviv, starting on 10 February.

Honorary Consul of Iceland:

We are trying to promote Iceland-Jordan touristic relations

EDITOR'S NOTE: Geographically, Iceland is isolated form the world by huge waters. Its active and ambitious people have managed to reach Europe and other continents through diplomatic, trade and cultural relations. Iceland's Honorary Consul in Jordan, Mrs Stefania Khalifeh spoke to Awni Abu Gosh, of *The Star* on the history of this country and its relations with Jordan. Excerpts follow.



Stefania Khalifeh

Can you tell me something about Iceland?

Iceland is an independent nation living on a large island in the North Atlantic. Its population is not greater than a medium sized town elsewhere (255,855 as of December 1990). Though its per capita income is among the highest in the world. Iceland is greatly dependent on Europe. However, in 1974, it celebrated the 1100th anniversary of the country's settlement by the Norwegian Vikings. Home of Europe's oldest parliament, Iceland has also shown a devotion to learning, from the writing of the medieval Sagas to the standard of education which makes possible the high technology of its economy today. Statistics give no idea of this treeless island's strange beauty, of limitless horizons and clear skies, of a myriad of wild flowers and birds, of magnificent glaciers. Nor will they tell you that the Gulf Stream keeps her harbors icefree despite the extremely northernly latitude. They can never describe the dramatic contrast between the 24-hour daylight of summer and the 20-hour darkness of midwinter.

A 12 century old country with so little population. How come?

The history of Iceland is different from that of most other countries; Island has no prehistoric period. Iceland was the last country in Europe to be settled in the Middle Ages, when all neighboring countries had been inhabited for thousands of years.

In Greek and Roman sources, there is mention of Thule, the northern most island of the world. Though not necessarily corresponding exactly to Iceland, Thule was the first name of the country and was used for some time in the Middle Ages.

Roman coins (dating about AD 300) have also been found in recent excavations, possibly meaning that seafarers from Roman England at the time had reached Iceland then.

The Irish however, discovered this far away island in the 8th century, and Irish hermits lived from time to time in the country they called Thule.

Nordic explorers discovered Iceland around the middle of the 9th century, and a Norwegian disgruntled with the cold climate there, gave it the name Iceland which has been kept ever since. Iceland's first permanent settler was a Norwegian, who made his home near some hot springs in the southwest of the Island. He named the place Reykjavek (Smoky Bay), after the white clouds of geothermal steam he saw rising there, and it was on this spot that the capital city of Iceland 'Reykjavek' was born.

Does that mean the Icelandic people are originally Norwegians?

Tradition says that the Age of Settlement in Iceland began in AD 874 up to AD 930. In this period, the country was populated. The great majority came from Norway and other Nordic countries, but a fair number came from the British Isles, particularly Ireland. These different elements mixed and fused in various ways to create a new nation, the Icelanders, a nation of immigrants.

But how did they manage their new society in that isolated place at that time?

In that new settlement, the most powerful chieftains soon found the need for come kind of common framework that would legally unify the country. The result was the setting up of the Icelandic Commonwealth, and the republic was established in AD 930.

Strange. A republic at high times of kingdoms?

Indeed, there was no real executive power in that medieval republic, which in part contributed to its eventual demise, though legislative and judicial powers were vested in the Parliament.

In those distant times, from which the Sagas date, the Icelanders were still a seafaring nation, taking part in lucrative Viking raids, and exploring the high seas. In fact, in their voyages they discovered Greenland and set up a settlement there. An Icelandic team also reached the east coast of North America about 500 years before Columbus.

Settlers in Iceland were heathen. However, it was visited by many Christian missionaries, and in the year 1000 AD, Christian faith was adopted by the Parliament. Christianity brought not only a new faith to Iceland, but also links with European culture.

Was that the main reason for the collapse of the first republic?

In fact, the balance of power collapsed in the 12th and 13th centuries as bitter conflicts and open warfare broke out among the strongest chieftains vying for supremacy. The chieftains turned to the Norwegian king for support. Eventually, Iceland came under the reign of the Norwegian crown in 1262 AD. When Norway passed into Danish hands, sometime later, Iceland was ruled, too, by the same kingdom for little over a century.

In the 16th century, the Danish king introduced some reforms to his realm. Icelanders rebelled against him, but they were finally defeated. Through those reforms, the King acquired the wealth of the Church. Danish merchants were granted monopoly on the lucrative trade of Iceland. In 1662 the Danish king assumed absolute power, and the Icelanders suffered from economic and authoritarian restraints. The 17th and 18th centuries were the hardest times in the life of the Icelanders: natural catastrophes, volcanic eruptions, poverty, epidemics, harsh governments, etc. In fact, the whole nation came close to being wiped out in that period.

How did the nation survive?

Influenced by new liberal ideas from the continent in the 19th century, the Icelandic students launched - with the active support of their countrymen - the movement for freedom and independence. Jon Sigurdson was their leader, and a proclaimed national hero (with his birthday, 17 June, being celebrated as a national day in the country).

The independence movement was slow, but steady, and was marked by a number of milestone events. Trade monopoly was lifted in 1854. In 1904, the Icelanders finally gained their own government residing in Iceland. By 1918 though Icelanders were still subjects of the Danish crown, they were in control of their internal affairs for the next 25 years. In 1944, the Parliament decided to cut all ties with Denmark and establish an independent republic, which was approved by a 97% vote in a national referendum.

The modern republic of Iceland is governed by a constitutional democracy, 4-year parliamentary elections, and a 4-year elected president. The president of Iceland today is Vigids Finnbogadottir, who has been serving since 1980, when she became the first woman ever in the world to be elected head of state in a democratic election.

What about Iceland's international relations?

Iceland is a member of the Untied Nations, NATO, the Council of Europe, EFTA, OECD, GATT, and many other organizations. And, of course, Iceland is part and parcel of the Nordic countries, and the parliamentary Nordic Council in particular.

When were Iceland's relations with Jordan established?

Back in 1989. In October of that year, His Majesty King Hussein, and the accompanying 65-member delegation, had a stop over in Iceland on their way to Canada. Feeling well received by the Icelandic President, King Hussein thought of the idea of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The procedures followed. The then Jordanian ambassador to the UK, Dr Albert Butros presented his credentials in Reykjavek as a non-resident ambassador to Iceland.

On 16 May 1990, Iceland opened its consulate in Amman, with myself as the first woman consul in the country.

Noteworthy, my designation as a representative of Iceland in Jordan was really timely in our terms. We had some 55 Icelanders in several Middle Eastern countries, especially in the Gulf region, when the Gulf War broke out in 1990. I had the primary responsibility of evacuating and sending them back home safely. They were medical doctors, technicians, managerial experts, with their families, working in Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, UAE, Oman, and Bahrain.

However, in March 1992, King Hussein had another stop over in Iceland on his way to the US and Canada again. Official meetings between the leaders of the two countries, the Prime Ministers, and also foreign ministers were held in Reykjavek on bilateral relations.

What concrete protocols of cooperation and friendship with Jordan do you have?

Mainly cultural. Our biannual Reykjavik Art Festival (visual art, opera theatre, song recitals, etc.) was jointly opened in May 1992 by Prince Faysal, Princess Alia and the Icelandic President.

The exhibition "Two Thousand Years of Color", featuring Jordanian mosaics, and Mrs Widad Kawar's collection of costumes and jewelry at the National Gallery. In fact, the exhibition had previously toured Denmark and Sweden, and received a larger audience than any other exhibition.

Iceland assists Jordan in the filed of natural resources. Two scholarships have already been granted to Jordan, and the third will be given next year to study geothermal utilization at the UN Geothermal University in Iceland.

The plantation of a Scandinavian forest in Baqa is a source of our pride. Its inauguration took place in 1989 with the presence of the Swedish King Carl Gustaf.

Currently, we are trying to promote Iceland-Jordan touristic relations. We have opted to invite the Jordanian minister of tourism and antiquities to Iceland, and after that see the proper measures of tourist group exchanges. ■

Point of order

By Raed Al Abed

Kill the electoral draft law

☛ A few weeks before the formation of the Kabariti cabinet, the former Government introduced a new electoral draft law for the 1997 elections. It is the same 'one man one vote' law, but with slight amendments. The number of deputies will go up from 80 to a 100, while the voting age is to be reduced from 19 to 18. The draft law eases the registration process by handing this duty to the Civil Status departments around the country. Voters would be able to use their national IDs instead of their electoral cards. The articles of the draft law have been narrowed down to 59 from the present 75 articles. These amendments are to encourage citizens to participate in the coming election.

Our happiness unfortunately did not last long as we read the rest of the draft law. The designers of the proposal violated national interests by repeating the mistakes of the current law in the enforcement of sectarianism and ethnicity, which take the country back to the 1940s when it was divided into categories of Muslims, Christians, Chechens, Circassians and Bedouins.

This is unfortunate, especially when all Jordanians are equal in the eyes of the Constitution, and when we claim to have succeeded in creating a social integration between Jordanians.

The new draft law increases the deposit to stand for elections from JD 500 to JD 1000. Such an amount will prevent many qualified people who cannot afford this kind of money, and will limit the participation of political parties, most of whom are already bankrupt. If the draft goes through it will only be people with lots of dough that will run for the elections.

The current law bans campaigns in mosques, universities and schools, something which could be understandable. But the new draft extends the ban to public places. Where should candidates campaign when the time comes, may we ask?

Voters can only elect in there place of residence—the area of residence which is stated in the Family Book.

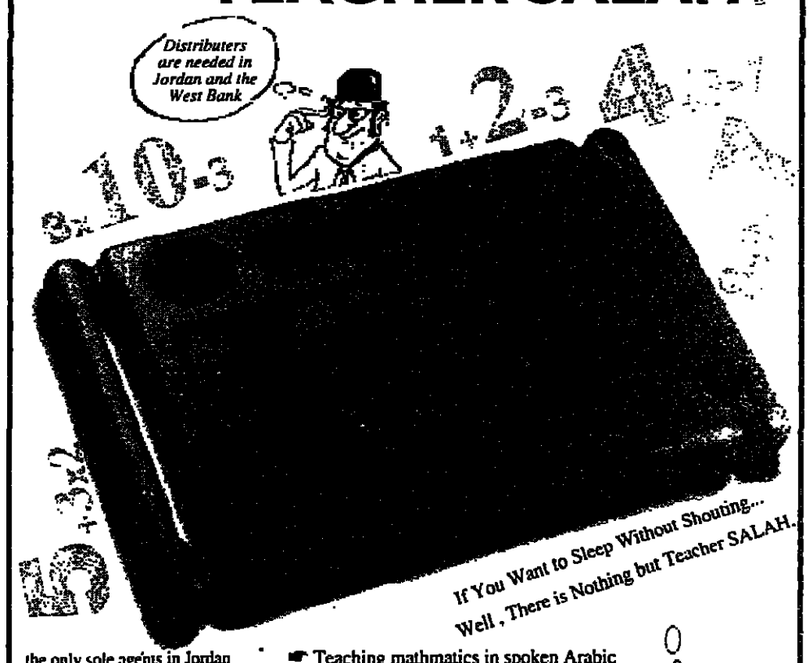
Concerning the distribution of seats, we will let the numbers talk. Jordan has a population of 4,139,458, according to the 1995 statistics —7.6% are foreigners— if we divide the 3,824,859 citizens on the 100 [suggested] seats of the Lower House, one deputy will represent 38,248 citizens. In that respect, seats should be distributed according to the 12 governorates and to the density of the population. Unfortunately, the draft law goes exactly against the wishes of the people. The Amman Governorate has 38% of the total population, and as such should get 38 seats, but the draft law gives it only 22 seats. This means that the governorate will lose 5.8% of the seats. The Zarqa Governorate, which forms 15.5% of the population, deserves 15.5 seats, while the proposal gives it only nine seats, 5.6% less than its right. Al Mafraq Governorate is also hard done by. Al Mafraq has 4.3% of the population, it deserves 4.3 seats, but only gets three seats.

The governorates of Jerash, Ajloun, Irbid and Balqa in the north of Amman constitute 29.9% of the population, but will get 35 seats. The five governorates of Madaba, Karak, Tafila, Ma'an and Aqaba form 11.95% of the population, and get 21 seats.

The new cabinet is asked to review the proposal and even to withdraw it. To come up with a civilized electoral law shouldn't be a hard job. The country should be dealt with as one unit, with Jordanians as one people regardless of their origin, or ethnic background. ■

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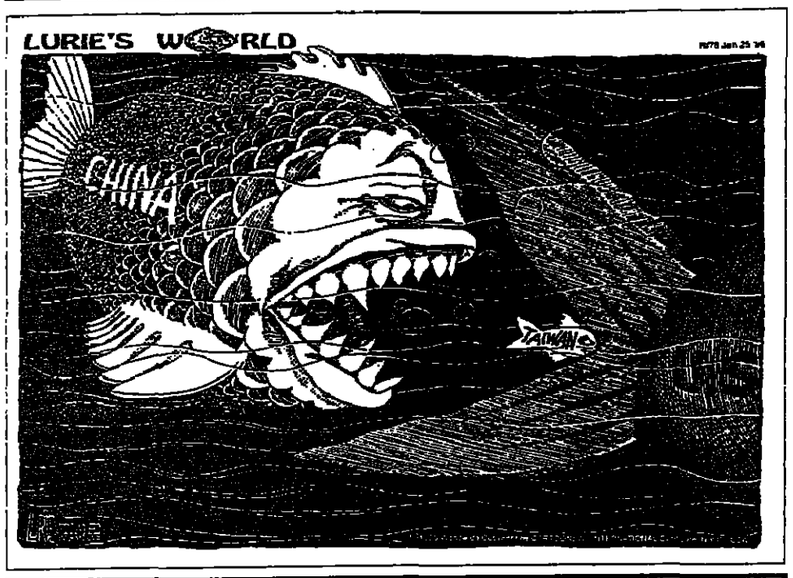
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Our Say. . . .

Kabariti and the promise of change

JORDANIANS ARE PINNING high hopes on the performance of the Government of Abdel Karim Kabariti which was formed this week. The Royal letter of designation, which has become the mandate of this Government, reflects boldly the aspirations of all Jordanians at this important phase of their lives.

The white revolution that His Majesty King Hussein has called for, requires a strong Government that is able to translate its promise of change into reality.

Mr Kabariti already has his hands full. While his Government will undoubtedly make important gains on the foreign policy front, Jordanians are hoping that a total change will materialize on the domestic front as well. It is here that the new Government will face the most crucial of challenges. But while the challenges are abundant, so are the opportunities.

Mr Kabariti has shown on many occasions that he is a man of deeds rather than words. In his short tenure as Minister of Foreign Affairs in the previous Government, he was able to create positive change in Jordan's relations with its neighbors, especially Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. King Hussein's upcoming visit to Saudi Arabia next week is the result of Mr Kabariti's endeavors to take Jordan beyond the Gulf War phase and into a new era of Arab reconciliation.

But Jordanians should not let emotions run high. The Kabariti Government will have to deal with problems that are enormous in size and require more hard work than quick solutions. Unemployment, falling standards of living and economic stagnation and other ailments will not disappear overnight. If anything they require a true change in the mentality of Government in Jordan. But more importantly, bitter medicine may be prescribed for these ailments to disappear.

It is here that Mr Kabariti and his team of ministers need to concentrate their efforts. The opportunities made available by peace in the Middle East are many. So far, Jordanians have seen little of the promised fruits of peace. One of the ironies in Jordan today is the almost total dependency of people on the Government. The latter has grown big and inefficient. Foreign investors tend to shun countries where red-tape and inefficient civil service are the norm. This is why Mr Kabariti faces some tough decisions ahead.

To create a new set of traditions at the public service level he will have to reduce Government size and influence allowing the private sector and market forces to slowly take over with minimum pain.

That's why we view the Kabariti Government more as a transitional force, not in the sense of its tenure and durability, but in the nature of its mission.

Change will not come in two or three months time. Our expectations must not be dashed by the slow pace with which reform will take place. We should not sit idly by and watch miracles take place. For change to happen we have to begin at the grassroots level—and that will take time.

Letters to the Editor

Job well done

Dear Sir,

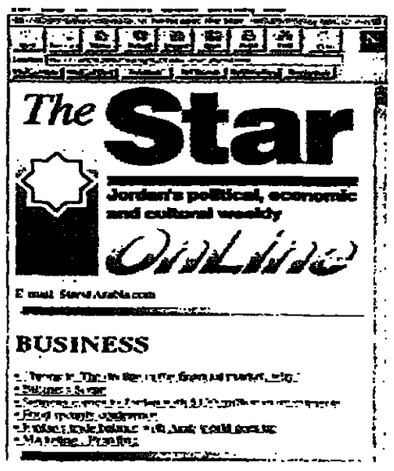
THIS IS wonderful. I am an American-born proud Jordanian and have traveled *to Jordan many times. I also have attended* the University of Jordan to learn to read and write in Arabic.

At that time, I looked forward to the new issue of *The Star* every week, and would read it from front to back in a matter of hours, especially enjoying the Technology section.

So when surfing the net, I encountered *The Star* Online, and was elated. Thanks for a wonderful service to all Jordanians all over the world. Now I look forward to each and every edition online. ■

Sincerely,

Issa Dabbneh, "aa"@aa.com.Internet


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Water:

A vital need for the security of the region

The leaders of the two ancient cousin civilizations should be too wise to let such an opportunity as provided by the Wye Plantation talks slip away, thus continuing to face both war with each other and war with nature

By Carrie Nelle Moye
US Star Correspondent



THE ANCIENT Greek historian Herodotus, known as the Father of History, immortalized himself and his wisdom by saying, "Egypt is the gift of the Nile." The Middle East, like much of the world, is suffering increasingly from water shortages, leading to crop failures and subsequent scarcity of food, and, in many instances, decreasing energy (based on water/electricity) production.

Water, food (versus military) security and energy are the major issues being confronted by the Syrians and Israeli negotiators meeting now at Wye Plantation in Eastern Maryland, in a forceful attempt to bring to fruition the cycle of peace in the Middle East. Despite the intricate and inalienable connection between the three factors, water is the one single most important issue that demands the attention and spearheads the list of vital interests.

Despite the many differences and animosities that have been both blatant and festering for the past half century between Israel and Syria (and with it, Lebanon) the two sides have come to realize that peace is the only alternative for the survival of the region and the continued existence of viable political structures. On the surface, the negotiating teams are debating borders, lines of internationally recognized cease fire demarcation, observation posts and security zones, buffer areas and multinational forces to monitor and separate the antagonists—but water is the essence, the element that is omnipresent and transcends all other complexities in the process of the final negotiations.

This has long been known by the protagonists and now is becoming evident to the world: It is not territory per se but the water resources in the territory which hold the ultimate key to the eventual break-through to peace. The Golan Heights are part of the slopes of Mount Hermon, towering at the point where the borders of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Israel meet. Mount Hermon is the highest elevation in the Anti-Lebanon range, annually attracting abundant rain and snow. The waters of Lake Tiberias/Sea of Galilee and the waters of many rivers and streams feeding the Jordan River originate from the underground aquifers of Mount Hermon. Control and protection of the slopes and underground sources will assure abundant supplies of water, hence additional intensive farming, production of electricity and the greening of all land therefore make it hospitable for additional human habitation. In a region where water is the source of life, in a region where striking water out of rock by Moses was a miracle accepted by the three great religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam—in such a region water means literally the continued existence of nations. For Israel, access to the waters of Mount Hermon is vital for human consumption, agriculture, industry and reclamation of the desert. Whether Israel possesses atomic bombs is less vital to the survival of the state than the availability of water. Atomic bombs may deter enemies and aggression, but only water can make life possible for the population whose calling was to gather in the "promised land" where milk and honey flow. Where there is no water, there will be neither milk nor honey—and no inhabitants to stay or immigrants to come.

For Syria and Lebanon, the problems are similar. Syria is facing a severe crisis in water resources and energy production due to the construction of many dams in Turkey on the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. Syria's population is growing rapidly, its industries are expanding and its agriculture is flourishing as a result of Haffez Al Assad's new economic policies of relaxation from socialism and movement toward a free market economy. If Syria and Israel do not cooperate and share the water resources of Mount Hermon, both stand to lose.

The leaders of the two ancient cousin civilizations should be too wise to let such an opportunity as provided by the Wye Plantation talks slip away, thus continuing to face both war with each other and war with nature. In the foreseeable future, it may not be surprising to see Syria and Israel joining forces to protect, defend, develop and maximize the use of this precious source of water. A few years ago, who would have dared to believe that one day Syria and Israel would be prepared to wage war, side by side as allies, to defend their common sources of water, even against an adversary/friend like Turkey?

One can only hope that Turkey, the most likely threat to the Middle East water source, would not challenge the results of the long sought peace between Israel and Syria by undermining the livelihood of its neighbors, its future markets, and suppliers of its petroleum. ■

The White Revolution

The Government and the new work ethic

By Khairi Janbek

WITH GREAT excitement, Jordanians have received the news of the formation of a new cabinet to implement His Majesty's Jordanian white revolution. And with greater excitement, Jordanians are awaiting the changing of the guard, that will work under the cabinet to fulfill the directives of King Hussein.

The injection of new blood into the Jordanian "body politic" could not have come at a more timely moment, for the despair and disillusion felt by the Jordanian people was *reaching a stage of apathy and* uncommitted carelessness. Perhaps now the warnings and openness of His Majesty, and the tireless efforts of HRH Crown Prince Hassan in emphasizing the King's desire for a modern Jordan, built on the principles of pluralism, respect of human rights, and equal opportunities can be taken up seriously by a new generation of officials, trained in Hashemite thought, and believers in the future of Jordan.

Mr Kabariti has shown great abilities in understanding the future political dimension pursued by the Jordanian leadership. Its close working relationship with the new Chief of the Royal Court, Mr Own Al Khasawneh will provide the right equilibrium between the necessary liason of both institutions and the freedom of manoeuvrability for the Government. Both gentlemen have first hand experience in working under the command of His Majesty, and are of the same school of thought as Prince Hassan. Exciting and fruitful times are awaiting the Jordanian people, but nothing will come about without engendering the work ethic into our psyche, and preparing ourselves for more committed hard work.

As for the composition of the Government, there has been some rumblings regarding the fact that there are many Lower House deputies in the Cabinet. But such complaints must take into consideration that those Parliamentarians are after all the representatives of the people, who have been elected freely to represent their voters and when possible, help in carrying out the policies promised in their pre-election manifestos.

At one point, we seem to want parliamentarians to shout on our behalf in the corridors of the legislature, but do not want them to carry out the policies we have elected them to implement. If there is disaffection with the performance of our MPs, then perhaps voters ought to be more careful, and more importantly realize that, we cannot constitutionally import our parliamentarians from abroad nor appoint them in our Government.

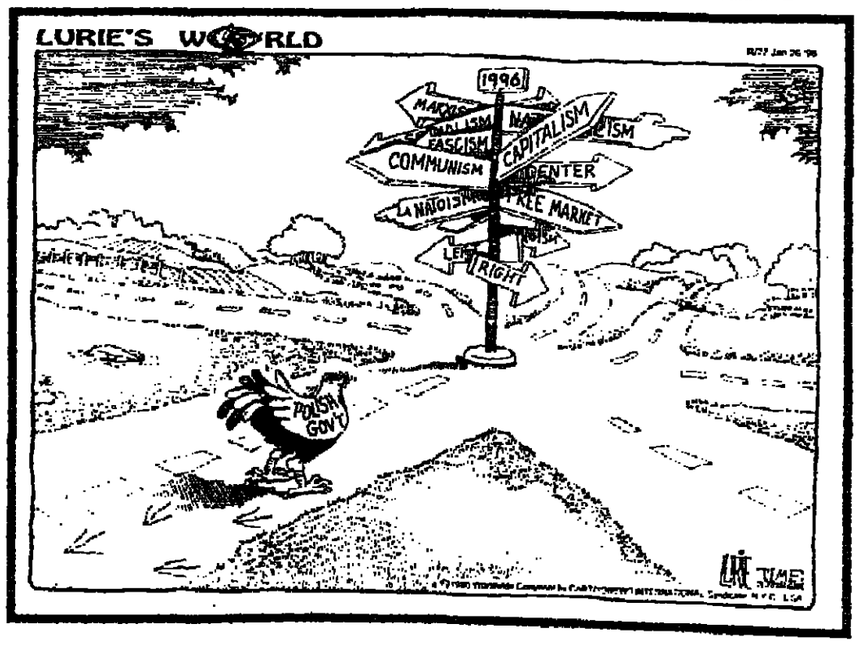
For a Parliamentarian, the best venue to carry out the desired policies of the voters is obviously the executive branch. There is a good opportunity for them now, to start practicing what they have preached for a very long time under the dome of Parliament. A Government that reflects the diversity of all political views, that accepts and upholds our constitutional democracy, is a true Government of national unity that deserves all the support from all the believers in the future of Jordan and its national unity.

It is not enough though, to rest on our laurels only by virtue of having an efficient team to govern the country, but we must take our fate into our own hands in working together for our own independent future. Prince Hassan has been leading tirelessly in the field of practice, carrying out the commands of our King. And leading by example is the work ethos of our Crown Prince. It is expected by us Jordanians to follow such an example in order to have a stake in the development and prosperity of our land.

With optimism, we look forward to seeing a Government that runs the country by example, and is not ashamed of rolling up its sleeves in the pursuit of the well being of the Jordanian citizen. Perhaps the new energy injected into our system may at last have the ripple effect in reaching parts of our consciousness, that could not be reached before, by the other governments. A government that is not afraid to govern is a committed government, and the journey to achieving the fruits of the white revolution must pass through the cathartic effects of the courage of conviction when it comes to the long-awaited purging of our unhealthy system of public service.

We ought to be reminded that public service means actually what the term indicates, and that is "service." The Jordanian tax payer and citizen, is not the servant of the official, but rather the opposite. The official is the servant of the citizen. This warped relationship between insignificant power seekers and the ethos of public service must be corrected before anything else.

We are confident that the cabinet of Mr Kabariti will tackle the issue, and it will not be easy to destroy all those centers of power, monopoly, and vested interest, but unfortunately we do not have many choices, and the Jordanian citizen is aching to restore his dignity and participate in the decision making process. So let the system be purged from its untrue elements, and let us together allow our aspiring youth to take their rightful place in our society. On with the White Revolution. ■



Middle East Beat
By Khairi Janbek

The flag wars

ALL OF a sudden, and with a mixture of jingoism and extreme nationalism, an ancient rivalry between Turkey and Greece has almost flared up into a bloody war with dire consequences for the region and world politics. Now that peace is at hand in the Arab world and Israel, those ancient conflicts in the age of nationalism demand the world's attention like never before.

Warships facing each other, jets breaking the sound barrier, and crack troops from both sides confronting each other to complete the jigsaw and terminate the scenario. A deserted island almost divided the world and brought it a step closer to more confusion. A couple of Greek individuals found a deserted island and decided to plant the Greek flag on its soil, a scene reminiscent of the age of conquest and adventurism.

No one bothered to ask whether such an action is trivial, but in the spirit of ancient conflicts, a couple of Turks moved into the island and replaced the Greek flag with a Turkish one: that island existed without any particular flag for a very long time.

Sovereignty, in the 21st century is going to be defined by immature actions. Counter claims will be lodged through the barrel of the gun. The irony is that both countries are NATO members and dependent on the EU. Both states, one European and the other aspiring to be so, have carried out their centuries old conflict, to the shores of Europe.

Despite the bravado and slogans, one cannot help but think that there is more to this flag-island conflict than meets the eye. Undoubtedly the conflict almost flared up into a full war on many occasions. However, recent circumstances are indicating a more dangerous developments.

The inability of the Turkish PM to form a coalition may have played a role in capitalizing on an already volatile situation to promote Turkish interests and Turkish sovereignty. If this is the case, then one can assume that it is only natural to act like a quick draw fighter, and win as many votes as one can. If re-election is what faces Turkey, the flag contest will be used to the maximum. It seems that the lack of government in a country in no way hinders it from launching an attack.

As for Greece, the advent of a new prime minister is a difficult task, especially when one considers the successor of Mr Papandreo. The flag story may have provided a good opportunity for the Greek prime minister to establish himself. Both sides decided to take the hard road, rather than resort to the ancient act most suitable to ancient conflicts: diplomacy.

The pattern from now on, seems set. Medium size European or those aspiring to be European will be acting in a belligerent manner. This is unbecoming of their traditions and history, and, more importantly, way beyond their financial capabilities.

Greece is still close to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, and made its intentions clear regarding the Macedonia question. Problems still exist with Albania and Bulgaria, and it seems that it enjoys playing the role of a main power in the area.

Turkey for its part, controls the water tap of the Middle East, and with 35 dams, has a little niche for itself as a major force of arbitration in the area. Although the hopes and dreams of both nations should not have put them in conflict, each is looking in a different direction.

The Mediterranean island of Cyprus is still a bone of contention, and the years of psychological enmity have not been digested as part of history. This will not be the last confrontation for both countries, but one hopes that diplomacy will be used more often. ■

Business scene

■ The Jordan Press and Publication Co., (Ad Dustour) is to distribute JD 375,000 to it shareholders. This is 25 percent of the profits it made in 1995. The company is increasing its paid up capital to two million dinars. It has already floated 500,000 shares on the market at a nominal price of JD 1 per share. Its decision to increase its dividened to the shareholders stemmed from the fact that the newspaper is now only paying 15 percent in income tax and not the 38 percent it used to pay.

■ The net operational profits of the Arab Financial Services Co. has increased to $3.8 million for 1995. This is a 700 percent increase over 1994 which was a mere $0.5 million. As a result it is now able to pay five percent to each of its shareholders.

■ The Al Jiser Al Arabi Shipping Co., which is owned by the Jordanian, Iraqi and Egyptian governments, has made a profit of JD 6 million for 1995. Speaking to *Ad Dustour*, the general manager Capt., Mohammad Dalabieh said that $5 million were invested in Al Jiser Al Arabi in 1995. This means that, in addition to the profit it made, it now owns half of its fleet.

■ The number of new companies which registered in the Ministry of Industry and Trade was 173 as of last December, compared to 144 in the same period of 1994. This is a 23.6 percent increase. What is surprising however, is that the capital of these companies was only JD 9,590645 compared to JD 21,257,58 for 1994. This means that there is a JD 11.766,413 difference. About 56 of these companies had a capital of JD 12.6 million.

■ The AFM closed at 154.93 points last Monday. The 0.63 percent increase over the day before is the result of the optimism connected with the new government's intention to accelerate economic reforms and promote investment. Traded shares amounted to 232,836 at a value of JD 765.765.

■ New Certificates of Deposit worth JD 15 million will be issued by the CBJ on 10 February at an interest rate of 9.25% and 9.5% for three and six months respectively. The CBJ also advised the licensed banks of its readiness to re-buy CDs in JDs at an interest rate of 10%. The assets of CDs amounted to JD 386.4 million.

Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 7 FEBRUARY

	Buy JD	Sell JD
	0.7080	0.7100
	1.0878	1.0932
	0.4820	0.4844
	0.5913	0.5943
	0.1403	0.1410
	0.6726	0.6760
	0.4304	0.4326
	0.0451	0.0453

Exchangers have to think twice before dealing in the Iraqi dinar

AMMAN (Star)—The abrupt increase in the rate of exchange of the Iraqi dinar in Jordanian markets has several dimensions. During the last five years of UN sanctions against Iraq, Jordan was the only source of basic consumer goods for Iraq. Although Jordan relied on Iraq for 95% of its needs of oil supplies, the latter continues to owe Jordan about JD 1.2 billion. The sudden change in the Iraqi currency inflicted about JD 100 million worth of losses on Jordanian dealers and merchants in 1994 alone.

Today, the imminent agreement between Iraq and the UN Security Council on a partial lifting of the sanctions has allowed expectations and speculations to flourish among merchants. Until last 17 January (just one day before Iraq announced its readiness to negotiate the UN proposal), JD 1 equaled 4,000 Iraqi dinars. Last Saturday, JD 1 = 700 Iraqi dinars. Such a leap in the rate of exchange was a golden opportunity for those Jordanians who still owned millions of worthless Iraqi dinars to promptly sell them. In a sense, they felt that they could recuperate some of their 1994 losses. In another, they rid themselves of a devalued currency on the assumption that, under the new circumstances, Iraq may once again cancel the present bank notes. A money exchanger told *The Star*, that all those involved in this process are brokers, who prefer to be patient and wait for better chances.



Drawing lessons from the bitter experience of trading in the Iraqi dinar, the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) repeatedly warned Jordanian money exchangers of the high risk of trading in the Iraqi currency. However, Jordanian money exchangers are still optimistic of a better opportunity that is still to came. They are encouraged by the decision of the Iraqi Central Bank which fixed the rate of exchange at 500 Iraqi dinars for $1, compared to 3,000 Iraqi dinars for $1, some time ago.

Apart from those dealers who rushed this week and sold some of what they have, and those who await better chances, there are many merchants and money exchangers who have transferred the amounts they have to Iraq itself. They did so out of an awareness of a possible change in the Iraqi currency, and a possible closure of borders.

In addition to this wavering atmosphere and the uncertainty attached to the next steps to be taken by the Iraqi authorities in this regard, rumors are spreading that Iraq has issued a new 5,000 bank note.

Though this could be linked to the possibility of changing the currency itself, some exchangers believes that the more denominations that bank notes have, and the higher these denominations are, the easier forgery and counterfeiting become. For this reason, professional money exchangers are still wondering whether Iraq might regain the Swiss edition of its already cancelled currency.

Optimism, on the other hand, emanates from the official statements published in the Iraqi press on the forthcoming dawn that would put an end to the hardships of the Iraqi people. The press is actually referring to the pending outcome of the Iraq-UN negotiations on the partial lifting of the sanctions.

Though no Iraqi official has so far confirmed Iraq's acceptance of UN terms, which stipulate Iraq's unequivocal pledge to observe these terms before the resumption of oil sales, ordinary Iraqi people continue undeterred in their sale of dollars.

News reports show that bank assistants are even obliged to work extra hours to cope with the prompt increase in trade activity, and in dollar exchange in particular.

Meanwhile, an independent consultancy corporation in Kuwait said that in the absence of an OPEC schedule before Iraq (an OPEC member) resumes its oil exports, oil prices will be dealt a heavy blow. Shal for Economic Consultations expects oil prices to fall by $3 a barrel if Iraq rejoins the oil exporting countries.

Businessmen from Iraq and Jordan assume that partial sanction lifting will certainly be in favour of reviving the bilateral trade relations of both countries. They also expect a rejuvenation of commodity inflow in spite of the downsized trade protocol. The newly emerging situation will also reflect the policies of the two governments in regard to strengthening the role and contribution of the private sector which, until recently, had taken hold of trade exchange between the two countries. Hence, Jordanian money exchangers have to think twice before dealing in the Iraqi dinar. ■

Business Chronicle

On the economic role of information media

THE LACK of a conspicuous media strategy leads to a disruption of the information system. An effective media for economic journalism "requires a definite information policy first," said Upper House senator and former information minister Dr Jawad Anani. Outlining, the link between an information policy and a visible economic strategy in the country, Anani argues that an information system does not create economic decisions but is there to serve them.

Thus, he wonders how it could be possible to initiate a developmental information system with defined targets, while speaking about the consolidation of political democracy. He adds that the role of the media should be now to deepen the democratic process within the present concept of the economic philosophy regardless of the constraints imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

He pointed out that the current official media criticize only economic ideas and not their content. He says we have come to accept a subject under a certain title and reject it under different one.

On this point, the President of the Jordanian Businessmen Association (JBA) Mr Hamdi Tabba'a said that the economic role of our information system is still confined to transmitting news items without analysis, and from the official point of view. The opinion of the private sector on the same issue remains distanced and not herd. Tabba'a believes that only through dialogue between the private and public sectors can we come to a positive result.

Dr Mohammed Tarawneh, an economic professor at the University of Jordan shares Tabba'a opinion. He adds that despite the role of television and radio, the press can also bring the issues into focus and in being more analytical. "Though our information system does its best, it nevertheless continues to go after events, and not anticipate them."

Mr Walid Al Khatib, manager of the Amman Chamber of Industry (ACI), praised the role of the press in their attitude of openness towards world economies. He explained that through translations, financial columnists, and the economic stories they publish, newspapers do a good job.

Khatib, however, had reservations on the accuracy of some translations. He said some columnist contradict themselves. He said that given the dull nature of the subject, information economists have to present their material in an attractive manner. Al Khatib added that we are living today in what he called an economic period.

We should aspire to a better system of information economics. He called for an active role for the private sector, proposing that the JBA, ACI, ACC, etc, publish a specialized magazine and urged publishing houses to issue a periodical on economic problems.

The director of the Investment Promotion Dept (IPD) Dr Talib Rifa'i said information economics has two independent functions: to promote economic awareness, and its role in development. It should address itself to specialists, experts, and professional economists. Information economics, also, should have the task of raising the economic awareness of non-specialists, and those interested in economic issues. This can be called 'people's or popular' information economics. He tackled the subject in a critical and analytical approach. He said that we often talk about the developmental role of the information system in ideal terms, as if this role is designated to only garnish development, embellish feasibility projects and wise economic policies. In this way, we actually avoid probing into concrete issues with a view to changing them. He added that this treatment makes us concentrate on the form and leave out the substance which is the basis of a desired change.■

Aqaba

A great economic prospect

AMMAN (Star)—Short and Medium term projects are already underway in Aqaba to expand the city's domestic and regional role in the economic, tourist, transport, and services fields.

The Aqaba Port Authority is at the forefront in this regard. At a cost of JD 80 million, a two-stage project is being launched to increase the port's export-import capacity by 29 million tonnes per year (that is 10 million tonnes over the present capacity). The first stage is scheduled to be completed by the year 2000 at a cost of about JD 45 million. The second stage will be accomplished by the end of the new decade at a cost of JD 35 million.

By that time, planners expect the Aqaba main port to be moved to the southern coast, whilst the present one will be used for tourists. These projects promise to make Aqaba one of the most prosperous ports on the Red Sea.

The expansion of the Aqaba



Airport to cope with an increase in tourists is seriously studied. The Government has allocated JD 200 million. The aim is to make the airport into an international one and working around the clock with more staff and technicians. Upon its completion, the project will mean better services for southern Jordan and Aqaba in particular, and further foster the economic and touristic development of the region.

The transport sector in the southern part of the country is also undergoing development. In less than three years, the Aqaba-Naqab highway will be completed at a cost of JD 30 million. Other new roads for public transport, and international and ring highways connecting Jordan and Israel (namely Aqaba and Eilat) and land transport for cargo are being built in that region.

Despite the opposition against any new hotel projects in Aqaba, the Government has a different opinion. Officials stress that new hotels must be built to compete with Eilat.

Eilat has 13 times more hotel rooms than Aqaba's only 2000 rooms. At present, four-hotel projects at a cost of JD 30 million are under construction in Aqaba.

In this regard also, cooperation is expected between the authorities in both Aqaba and Eilat especially in building a bigger hotel industry to cater for tourists. Eilat attracts more than two million visitors a year.

Whilst it is true that Aqaba hotels operate full capacity between October and March every year, the aim is to prolong this period.

To boost the touristic mobility in Aqaba, a special tourist zone between Aqaba and Eilat is now considered. At the same time, a maritime peace park is being planned on the Red Sea. The project is designed to and aimed at the organization of the coastal line in a way that preserves the coral reefs and maritime environment in the area.

The ministries of tourism and official authorities concerned in both countries are expected to follow up on the issue, and take effective measures to realize these two projects for the interests of the local people and foreigners alike.

Aqaba is currently witnessing an active trade movement between Egypt and the Arab Gulf states which is managed by Jordanian merchants.

Moreover, Jordanian traders are also engaged in Aqaba in goat and sheep imports destined to local markets, and re-exported to Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinian self-rule areas. Meanwhile, there are prospects of Israeli bromine and salt exports to the Far East via Aqaba. ■

Big Mac registers huge profit

● McDonalds, the fast-food hamburger chain, has made a massive profit of $366.8 million in the last quarter of 1995, compared to $3.89 million in the same quarter of 1994.

Company sales world-wide for 1995 increased to a huge 37.7 billion. McDonalds made a 17 percent profit for 1995 to $1.4 billion compared to $1.2 the previous year.

The total worldwide sales increased to $29.9 billion dollars while the net profit increased to $10 billion, an 18 percent increase over 1994.

McDonalds opened up a 2430 restaurants raising its total number to 12380. Its net revenues inside the USA increased by eight percent to $4.47 billion while revenues from its international outlets increased by 28 percent to $5.32 billion.

Moving from food to cars, the American General Motors registered a profit of $1.9 billion dollars for 1995. This is a 19 percent increase.

Shoman chosen as banking personality for 1995

● The Chairman of the Arab Bank Mr Abdel Hameed Shoman has been chosen as the Arab banking personality for 1995, by the *Hadath Newsletter* which is published by the General Union of Arab Banks (UAB). He will be officially named at the annual meeting of UAB which is to be held in New York between 20-25 May.

The Arab Bank has just opened a new branch in Hebron in the West Bank. The Bank has branches in Gaza, Nablus, Ramallah, Jericho, Bethlehem, Al Rimal/ Gaza, Jenin, Tul Karim and Qalqiliya.

The Arab Bank has a comprehensive strategy to open branches through out the Palestinian territories.



Moroccan banks given high ratings

CAPITAL INTELLIGENCE, the Cyprus-based bank rating agency, announced the further extension of its Gulf/Mediterranean area coverage to Morocco, issuing initial ratings for two banks, Banque Marocaine deu Commerce and Exterieur and Credit du Maroc. The agency said that a further five Moroccan institutions would be rated in the next two months.

Banque Marocaine due Commerce Exterieur (BMCE) in 1995 became the first bank to be sold under Morocco's privatization program. It is the second largest bank in the kingdom and a specialist in trade finance. The private insurance group Royal Marocaine d'Assurances is now the controlling shareholder, with 19.3%. Foreign shareholders (10.3%) include Citibank, Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, Pictet et Cie, Union Bancaire Privee and Commerzbank. BMCE's new management has inherited a solid franchise and satisfactory financial base. However, the bank will be tested by the intensifying competition among local banks as well as tougher economic conditions. Moreover, it is expected that the scope of BMCE's business as well as the profile of its customer base will steadily shift in the future, thus increasing the bank's overall risk exposure over the medium term. In view of its importance in the market place and its well structured operation, Capital Intelligence assigned BMCE ratings of BBB long-term and A-2 short-term.

Credit due Maroc (CM), the sixth largest Moroccan bank, is a joint venture between Credit Lyonnais, which holds 43.2%, and a group of local institutional shareholders. The newly privatized BMCE has a 26.5% share in the bank. CM's management is independent from Credit Lyonnais but cooperation with the French bank is strong and constructive. CM enjoys acceptable asset quality and an adequate capital base. Profitability is average but prospects to increase earnings over the medium term are encouraging as provision expenses are expected to decline. Despite Credit Lyonnais' bad debt problems in France, Capital Intelligence views CM's long-term relationship with the French partner as a positive factor. Capital Intelligence said that the ratings assigned to CM, of BBS long-term and A-2 short-term, reflect the bank's good track record and overall sound financial position. ■

MARKET WATCH 3-6 February

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

SATURDAY	%	SUNDAY	%	MONDAY	%	TUESDAY	%
✦ Rafia Industrial	3.40	✦ Middle East Complex	5.63	✦ Jordan Rockwool Industries	5.43	✦ Intermediate Petro-Chem.	2.17
✦ JIMCO	2.63	✦ Jordan Industrial Resources	2.72	✦ Middle East Complex	5.33	✦ Jordan Modern Cabals	1.54
✦ Jordan Pipes Manufacturing	1.82	✦ El-Zay Ready Wear	1.82	✦ Naytak Diet & Moulds	4.48	✦ United Engineering	1.39
✦ Int'l Textile Manufacturing	5.56	✦ Arab International Hotels	2.68	✦ Arab Investment Bank	2.05	✦ Jordan Sulpho Chemicals	3.36
✦ Middle East Complex	5.33	✦ Jordan French Insurance	2.14	✦ Invest & Finance Bank	0.56	✦ Rafia Industrial	3.03
✦ Arabian Seas Insurance	4.44	✦ Baituna	1.31	✦ Zarka for Education & Invst.	0.85	✦ JIMCO	2.50

General Price Pointer	154.400	153.960	154.930	155.180
Trade Volume	1043257	688852	871347	720282
Stock Volume	457730	359982	414152	317067

Highest Traded Stocks

✦ Arab Bank	144.810	✦ Arab Bank	196.110	✦ Arab Bank	229.190	✦ Investment Bank	121.094

All data provided by ACCESS Tel: 646868 Fax: 646949

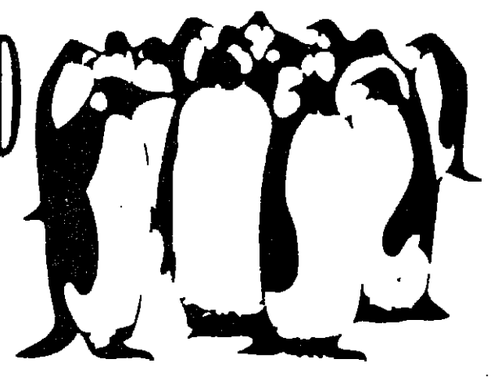
LURIE'S WORLD R/74 Jan 24 '95



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Tug-of-Budget-War

AROUND TOWN



The world of perfume at Abu Shakra's

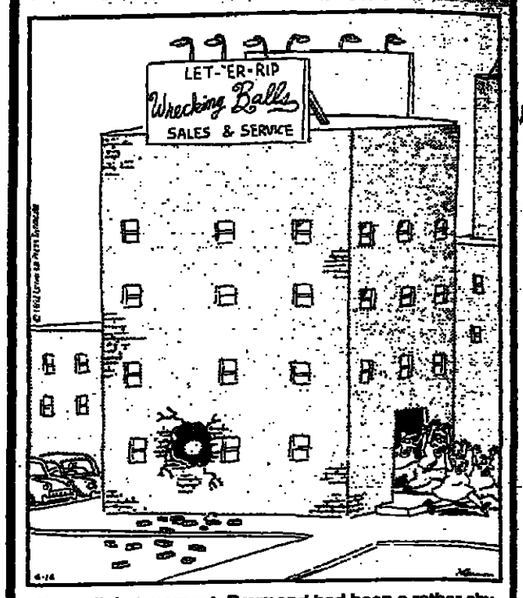
● Abu Shakra Trading Agency has won the trust of the Jordanian consumer. This was established through a questionnaire conducted by the Consumer Protection Committee. The questionnaire aimed to find out people's views and opinions of the products that are distributed through the Abu Shakra Trading Agency.

Abu Shakra أبو شقرة

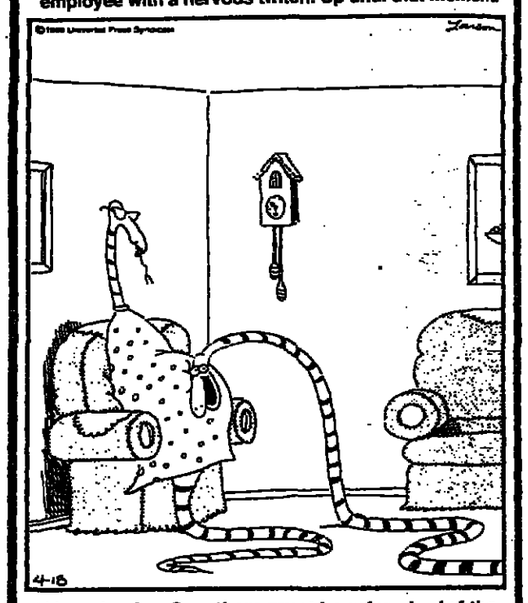
Mr Rami Abu Shakra, General Manager of the agency received a letter of appreciation from Dr Mohammad Husselnat and Dr Mohammad Al Bdoor who carried out the questionnaire. Abu Shakra Trading Agency is well known for its cosmetics and perfumes, with many world-famous brand names being distributed by it in Amman.

THE FAR SIDE

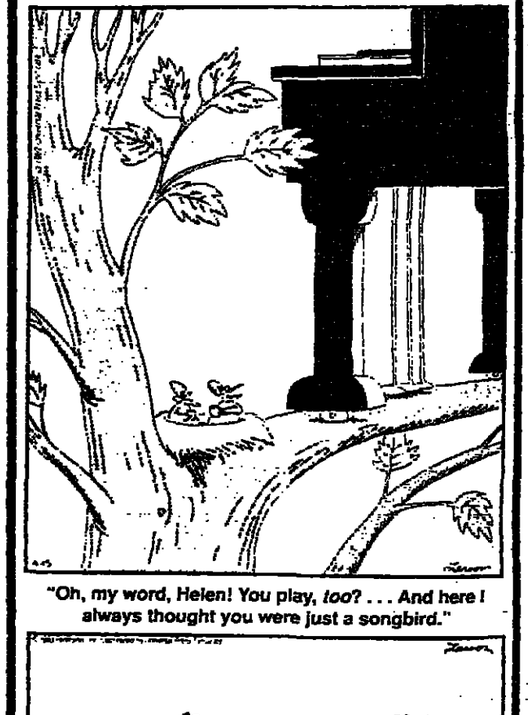
By GARY LARSON



Up until that moment, Raymond had been a rather shy employee with a nervous twitch. Up until that moment.



"I hear 'em!... Gee, there must be a *hundred* of the little guys squirmin' around in there!"



"Oh, my word, Helen! You play, *too*? . . . And here I always thought you were just a songbird."



Jordan Today

Tourism, culture finally find a voice

By a Star Staff Writer

JORDAN TODAY is the title of the Kingdom's latest publication in English. A handsome and handy pocket-size monthly, Jordan Today is targeted at a mixed audience of visitors and Jordanians. It was launched by Info-Media, the same publisher of The Star and Economic Perspectives, in September 1995 with a circulation of 3000 copies. The glossy magazine is distributed free of charge in all business and tourist hotels in Amman and is sold at selected newsstands. It is also available on board Royal Jordanian flights.

"Jordan Today is about Jordan and Jordanians," says Zeid Nasser, Chief Editor of the magazine. "In every issue we run stories about typical Jordanian issues, like Dead Sea salts or Arabian horses or handmade rugs." In addition to cover stories, Jordan Today offers a monthly interview with a Jordanian personality and focuses on an art or culture related issue.

"Our writers are young Jordanian freelancers who enjoy what they do because it takes them to places all over the Kingdom," says Editor of the magazine Haitham Ibrahim. "We want to cover Jordan in an interesting way. We don't want to stereotype our country and culture, so camels and Petra are still not on our list of stories."



An interesting feature about Jordan Today is the monthly cultural agenda which lists most of the important cultural activities that take place in and around Amman during the month. Another feature is the easy to use map of Amman, highlighting the main streets and important landmarks.

What both Jordanians and foreigners both tourists and businessmen like about Jordan Today is its "Guide to Jordan" section which contains essential information and telephone numbers: restaurants of all specialties, hotels, cinemas, night clubs, banks, gift outlets, embassies, airlines, car rental agencies..etc. Even executive secretaries are now throwing away their traditional telephone directories and replacing them with a recent copy of Jordan Today .

"We are aiming at a loyal Jordanian readership and we are doing that by providing interesting material to both locals and foreigners," says Nasser. "We're excited that the sponsors are happy with the product, they simply love it."

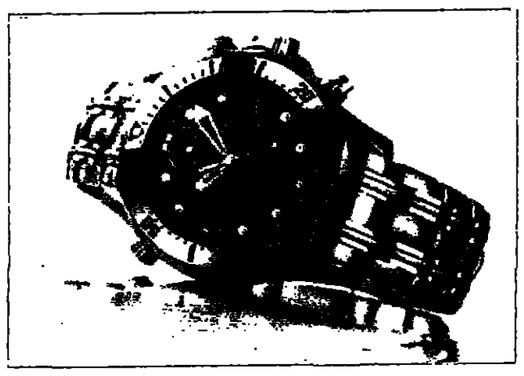
Sponsors include hotels, airlines, banks, rent-a-car agencies, traditional gifts outlets, restaurants and others. "It's a wonderful advertising outlet because it reaches an exclusive readership," says Nasser.

"As the tourism sector picks up as is expected this summer, publications like Jordan Today will be here to provide interesting information about the Kingdom," says Ibrahim.

But Jordan Today is not all about tourism. It has one of the best video and film sections in the Jordanian press and its "trax" column is already a hit with Jordanian rockers. "What we hope to do as we get bigger is to add more material about local cuisine, fashion, style, humor and even satellite programs," says Ibrahim.

The publishers of Jordan Today are happy with the way the magazine is developing so far. "Jordan's experience with glossy magazines is not a happy one," says Publisher Osama El-Sherif. "So we had to be careful to locate a niche in an already small market and then grow as that market grows. That's what happening now." ■

Timing the Olympics draw held in Riyadh



THE "Timing the Olympics" draw was recently held at the Bajsair Palace for Jewelry and Watches in Riyadh in the presence of a representative of the Chamber of Commerce. Mr Amar Bajsair and Mr David Morgan, General Manager of the Bajsair Palace. The five lucky winners of the draw were Ms. Khadija Ahmad Basudan, Mr Omar Imad Shoura, Mr Sami Azzat Elska, Mr Ramadan Ibrahim Shouman and Mr Ra'ed A. Rahman Al Mejmaj. ■

US Government announces 1997 immigrant Visa Lottery Program

THE US government recently announced a visa lottery program under which a specific number of permanent resident visas will be awarded in 1997 to eligible persons from areas of the world that have low immigrations rates to the United States. The visas awarded to winners in the draw will be apportioned among six geographical regions: Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, Oceania and South America. Applications will be chosen at random by computer, and winners will be notified by mail at the address listed on their entry no later than 1 July, 1997. After this notification by mail, winners will be eligible to apply for immigrant visas at the nearest US Embassy or consulate. The usual criteria for granting immigrant visas apply.

To participate in the lottery, applicants must have at least a high school education or its equivalent or two years of work experience within the past five years in an occupation that requires at least two years of training or experience. If an applicant wins in the draw and is notified but cannot later demonstrate that he/she fulfills this requirement, he will be disqualified.

Applications must be received at the correct address in the United States by regular airmail between 12 February, 1996 through March 2, 1996. Any entry received before or after this period and entries sent to an address other than those listed on the instruction sheet will be void and will not participate in the random computer selection. Only one entry for each applicant may be submitted, duplicate or multiple entries will disqualify individuals from registration for this program.

Please do not call the American Embassy in Amman regarding the special immigrant Visa Program. Telephone inquiries about the program will not be taken and applications sent to the Embassy will be destroyed. ■

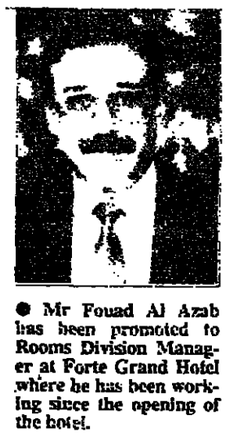
Another busy year for RACJ

AMMAN (Star)—The Royal Automobile Club of Jordan (RACJ) will have a busy '96. Their racing activities kick off by the Al Jawaal Rally on 1 March. After that, they will have what is called Fast Racing on 29 March. This race takes place inside the premises of the club.

The National Rally is on 12 April. This is to be followed by the International Jordan Rally that is to be held between 16-17 May. Again Fast Racing will be held in the following month on 21 June while Al Jawaal Rally will be held on 5 July. Another National Rally will be held on 26 July, while the yearly Al Ruman Race will be held on 16 August.

Fast Racing, yet again on 20 September and a National Rally will take place on 11 October. The Al Jawaal Rally of 8 November will be followed by the final National Rally on 13 December, thus ending the RACJ activities for 1996. ■

Al Azab promoted to Rooms Division Manager at Forte Grand



● Mr Fouad Al Azab has been promoted to Rooms Division Manager at Forte Grand Hotel where he has been working since the opening of the hotel.

Pizza Hut Top Gun Award goes to Pizza Hut Jordan

TOP GUN is a competition carried out by Pizza Hut International in their regional office for Middle East in Dubai It is an Award given for Pizza Hut Restaurants which make the biggest growth of sales for every month from June until the end of the year. The end of 1995 has brought the Top Gun sales incentive to a dramatic conclusion with three Jordan units running successfully.

Jordan scored the highest growth of sales from June 1995 until the end of the year and got the best growth of sales in the Middle East which has reached up to 240 percent in Jordan. Pizza Hut, Abdoun was the highest receiving $1000, the Gardens branch $600 and Shmeisani branch $300.

"I am proud that we became the winner of Top Gun competition in the Middle East, we took No 1, 2, 3 and will be receiving the awards very soon, said Mr Khaled Dahleh, General Manager of Pizza Hut in Jordan. "It will be represented to us officially and we will be calling the press to witness the event." He added "our plan for next year is to be more aggressive in terms of marketing and improving our service, because what made us grow last year and early '96, was that we have changed the whole image of Pizza Hut in Jordan by decorating new quality restaurants and raising the food standard to the level it should. Pizza Hut gowers in Jordan will feel like they are at any Pizza Hut in the world. My dream comes true when every body will speak of Pizza Hut in Jordan", Mr. Dahleh said.■

Teacher Salah, an electronic system for teaching children

AMMAN (Star)—An Electronic computerized teacher for children from the age of two to 12, can now be bought from the Jordan Technical Est. (JTE), in Amman. Named Teacher Salah, it provides arithmetic lessons based on the best elementary-school programs from grade one till six, using British and American systems. Teacher Salah is able to speak both in Arabic and English through its talking calculator.

"I would like to tell families, especially mothers and schools that the Teacher Salah electronic system is very beneficial to children," Mr Khalil Al Khalili, general manager of the JTE Salah told *The Star*.

"It teaches them mathematical procedures, and numbers in both Arabic and English" he added. "By using this system, the child will know how to add, subtract, divide and multiply," the sole agent for Teacher Salah in Jordan and the West Bank added

"Also the system has a quiz function for the child and if the child does well then the system jumps to another level to improve the child's intelligence," Mr Khalili said.

The Teacher Salah computerized system was designed by Suhaib and produced in Taiwan. " Teacher Salah is not expensive when compared to its abilities. This system will be available for the first time in Jordan this month at our head office in Jabel Luweibdeh and will be made available through our distributors in the Kingdom." Mr Khalili said.■



Khalil Al Khalili

THE Hollywood REPORT

The Year in Music

1995 was a big year for the music industry, both in the United States and around the world. Here is a run down of the top draws for 1995.

1995 Top Pop Artists

1. TLC
2. Boyz II Men
3. Hootie & The Blowfish
4. Real McCoy
5. Sheryl Crow
6. Madonna
7. Brandy
8. Bon Jovi
9. The Notorious B.I.G
10. Melissa Etheridge

1995 Top World Music Artists

1. Lebo M
2. The Chieftains
3. Gipsy Kings
4. Loreena McKennitt
5. Clannad
6. Cirque Du Soleil
7. Nightnoise
8. Mary Black
9. Ry Cooper
10. Cesaria Evora

1995 Top World Music Albums

1. The Lion King Rhythm of the Pride Lands
2. The Long Black Veil
3. Best of
4. The Mask and Mirror
5. Algeria
6. Celtic Legacy: A Global Celtic
7. Love & Liberte
8. Clannad Themes
9. Celtic Heartbeat Collection
10. Banba

This report was compiled especially for *The Star* by Ali Adawiya from Los Angeles



Madonna: one of the top artists in 1995

OVERHEARD AT TURINO..

CONSISTENTLY COMMITTED... TO BETTER HOSPITALITY

TURINO has advertised recently very special rates for their Suites Hotel with the emphasis on its consistent commitment to hospitality and service.

The idea is that Turino now offers ritz-style luxury in Amman for no more than the cost of a regular hotel room.

We understand that discounts in the low reason are over 40% especially to corporations and foreign client. The super plus at Turino is of course attributed to its two famous restaurants. The Club Restaurant and Cheers Elite Café.

If you are visiting Amman, Turino is around the corner of the southern end of 6th circle. It's moderately priced and the burgers and pizzas at Cheers Café are claimed to be among the best in the world!

Try Turino for dinner
Call 863 944
Swelfiyeh



AGENDA

Films

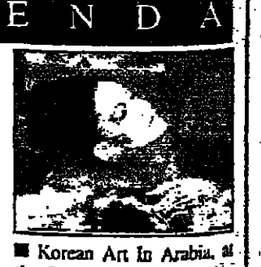
■ Bird at the American Center, today Thursday , 8 February at 2 pm.

■ *Lacombe Lucien* at the French Cultural Center on Monday 12 February, at 8 pm.

Exhibitions

■ Print-making and Painting exhibition by Jordanian artist Yasser Dweik, at Darat Al Funun continuing until 18 February.

■ *Estampe de Peintre en France* at the French Cultural Center until 29 February



■ Korean Art In Arabia, at the Royal Cultural Center continuing until 9 February.

Poetry Readings

■ A literary evening with Mr Huggins will take place at the American Center on Wednesday 14 February at 8 pm.

Palestine Post

Peres to visit Tunis

● The Israeli *Yediot Ahrnot* said that the Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres is to visit Tunisia in March. It will be the first official visit where he will meet the Tunisian President Zein Al Abbedin. Official sources say interest offices for the two countries will be opened in Tunis and Tel Aviv on 15 March. *Yediot Ahrnot* also said a high ranking Israeli official from the Foreign Ministry is presently visiting Qatar to open up an Israeli representative office; a similar one is being opened in Oman according to *Al Quds*.

Man expelled to Jordan

● The Israeli authorities expelled a man from Beit Jallah to Jordan. Mohammad Rajah Salameh is accused by the Israelis of spying for Iran. The 44-year-old man, who was expelled through the King Hussein Bridge holds a doctorate in philosophy from Beirut University.

The F-16 dilemma

● Jordan will not modernize its 12 F-16's in Israel, after all according to *Al Quds*. The recently acquired second-hand planes which are still in the United States need to be improved. Earlier, it was thought that the Israeli aviation industry would undertake such a task. But Jordanian officials backed off because of pressure from American aviation companies who wanted to carry out such improvement themselves.

Police cooperation but with a twist

● A move aimed at what can only be seen as greater cooperation, the Palestinian police in Hebron handed over 68 stolen cars to the Israeli police, Colonel Tareq Zeid, the head of the Palestinian police in the Hebron Governorate, told a press conference.

But the colonel was angry with the Israeli army who would no let him hold his press conference on time. As a protest, Zeid held the conference outside the designated place. He said on the way to the conference, Israeli soldiers, stopped him, demanded to see his ID and searched his car. He said that this was against the agreement signed between the Israelis and Palestinians.

Colonel Zeid said that stolen cars were the responsibility of the Israeli police because they lie within the territories that are under their control. These cars enter the Palestinian areas with the knowledge of Israelis, insurance companies and some in the Israeli police. He called on the Israeli authorities to control the entry of these stolen cars to the Palestinian areas as they cause great damage to the Palestinian economy. He said if the Israelis do not take action, the Palestinian side would be forced to burn stolen cars under an international committee.

In the Governorate of Qalqilya, the Palestinian police also handed to their Israeli counterparts 13 stolen cars, seven bicycles and three air conditioners.

Television in Bethlehem

● The Ministry of Information of the Palestine National Authority (PNA) has granted a temporary license to Al Ru'ab television station to transmit in the Bethlehem area. The Israeli authorities had closed down the station, and confiscated all its equipment in July 1994. The Chairman of Al-Ru'ab Mr Iyad Quimsseih said his station will now transmit daily to serve the people of the Bethlehem area.

Vote rigging: A third world phenomena

● Whilst in the eyes of many, the last Palestinian council was seen as fair and clean, in the eyes of others, there were serious irregularities, and vote rigging. Ballot boxes disappeared only to turn up later, there was switching of ballot boxes and in some cases, election officials extended the time for voting in cities like Ramallah, Nablus and Tulkarem. All this was done to ensure that only the "right" people were elected.

One of the most blatant violations occurred in Jericho. It is alleged that the PNA Minister of Local Government Sa'eb Erikat only managed to gain the Jericho seat by an extra 1200 votes that were cast by security men who were brought in from outside the area. The voters of Jericho wanted to elect their own local candidate, Ibrahim Ballo. In places like Abu Dees and Hebron, vote rigging occurred on a wide-scale. In Khan Youni in Gaza, ballot boxes were filled in people's houses and were taken out when they were needed. According to the weekly *Al Ahali* it was clear that the Fatah candidate, Zakarieh Al Agaha, would not win, so he went to his house and produced a number of previously filled ballot boxes. This angered his opponent and a punch-up occurred in which the Palestinian police later intervened.

The Carter Center and the National Democratic Institute in Washington have also just issued their first report on the elections. Their international delegation which was comprised of observers from 11 countries, monitored more than 100 voting centers. The report said that despite the fact that there was negative elements which at times disturbed the voting, nevertheless it is hoped that such issues will be dealt with in the future. It added that the elections' results are a historic opportunity for the Palestinian people.

Despite the short election campaign, candidates told observers that in the end, they managed to deliver their message. The report said that there was a high voter turn- out except in some areas in Hebron and Jerusalem (because of its special circumstances). The report praised the role of NGOs and of officials in electoral centers. It criticized what it called the huge Israeli army presence around post offices in Jerusalem which served as poll stations. Observers said this presence probably accounted for the low turn-out. The report said in some areas there were problems during the election day. Some parties indulged in provocative action especially in electoral centers in Gaza. In some centers there was campaigning that lead to disorganization. And in areas where there was high turn-out, the inspection on voting cards was not rigorous.

UJ student delegation to visit Al Najah

● A student delegation from the University of Jordan is to visit Al Najah University in Nablus and other universities on the West Bank said Rafiq Abu Aid, a member of the Student Council of Al Najah University who was on a visit to the UJ. The visit, which will take place shortly, is the first of its kind and is aimed at greater cooperation between the UJ and universities on the West Bank.

Cooperation in sports and youth

● Cooperation between Jordan and the Palestine National Authority is not only confined to the field of politics and economics. Cooperation in the field of youth and sports seems to be taking ground by the two sides. The Government in Jordan, for instance, has given more than $16,000 to the Palestinian Ministry of Youth and Sports. This went to repair the playing fields that had long been neglected during Israeli occupation. The Council of Arab Ministers of Youth and Sports had decided to extend aid to Palestinian playing fields and sports infrastructure that are in urgent need of repair, but so far only Saudi Arabia, Qatar Oman and Egypt have extended such support.

Catholicism losing ground in Latin America

By Juanita Darling
LA Times-Washington Post News Service

ALMOLONGA, Guatemala—For more than four centuries, this Indian village, like almost any from the Peruvian Andes to the Mexican Sierra, had just one place of worship: the Roman Catholic church on the square. But now it has 18 churches—and 17 are Protestant.

Inside the three-story Calvary Church, which now dominates the square, Mariano Riscaoche and Roque Yac told the story of the spiritual quest that changed their lives and their village.

"Twenty-one years ago, God was dead for the people here," Yac, 46, said as he and his friends sat on folding chairs. "Their minds were on parties and drinking."

To find an alternative, Yac and a dozen friends traveled to a nearby city, going from church to church. They studied the Bible. They tell of hearing from and experiencing God. Thus began the Protestant movement here.

Today, the Calvary Church has grown to 500 members, including Riscaoche, and 80 percent of the villagers are Protestants.

Although its conversion may have been exceptionally sweeping, Almolonga's switch from Catholicism is not unique, experts say. The Roman Catholic Church, while still the predominant religion of the region, is losing ground to other faiths in Latin America: the continent that was conquered in the name of Catholicism is growing more diverse in its beliefs.

Old-line Protestant churches that once attracted only a tiny minority now are being joined by fundamentalist, evangelical and Pentecostal churches. These newer denominations are vigorously seeking out and winning many converts with promises of miracles and visions and, many say, with meticulous attention to parishioners' needs.

Mormons, who do not consider themselves Protestants, also are finding huge new numbers in Latin America.

Sociologists, religious leaders and ordinary Christians offer various explanations for the trend.

Battles over liberation theology and pol tics have driven the Catholic faithful and, perhaps, sometimes distracted church leaders from tending their flocks. The church also has come under fire for ties to a corrupt elite that has perpetuated the impoverishment of millions.

Indeed, the most striking changes have occurred among the poor and uneducated—long Catholic stalwarts and, ironically, the ones for whom many of the churches' battles have been fought.

"We told people that we want to look for answers with them," said the Rev. Rogelio Poncelle, a Catholic priest in Morazan, El Salvador, an area of heavy combat during the Salvadoran civil war that ended four years ago. "But people want security, answers, and the (Protestant) sects offer that." The changes are occurring even as Pope John Paul II this week embarks on a to visit Venezuela and Central America, an area in which the highly popular pontiff has urged Catholics to reinvigorate and spread their faith.



Pope JOHN PAUL II: Has Cross, will travel

Up to one-third of the population is now Protestant in Brazil and Guatemala, 18 percent in El Salvador and 5 percent in Mexico. Protestant churches had been confined to Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast, where they were started by British settlers. Now, 72 denominations extend throughout the nation, which may be as much as 25 percent Protestant. A study by the Socio-Cultural Analysis Center at the University of Central America in Managua, the Nicaraguan capital, projects that by the year 2000, Nicaraguan Protestants will have nearly tripled their 1975 membership.

Pastor Dario Silva—whose Church of the House on the Rock in Bogota, Colombia, has grown from 72 members eight years ago to 5,000 now—sees a reason for the rise of Protestantism, saying, "After 500 years of Catholic domination, many people are passing the bill for ... problems to the Catholic Church and are looking for other spiritual options."

Protestants, particularly Pentecostal groups, have "a great interest in increasing their numbers," and they work at this goal, said the Rev. Gilberto Aguirre, director of the Evangelical Conference for Development, the principal association of Nicaraguan Protestant churches.

The Rev. Francisco Zuluaga, an advisor to the Episcopal Conference of Colombia, noted: "The (Protestant) sects work person to person, family to family, visiting homes and inviting people to talk about their problems. And that makes people feel so welcome and accepted that they begin to live the sect's religious experience as well."

In one measure of the churches' respective attentiveness to members needs, the Salvadoran survey found that more than two-thirds of Protestants reported that they recently had received a visit from their clergy members, compared with one-quarter of practicing Catholics.

With Protestants sometimes targeting lapsed Catholics for conversion and making inroads in general among the church's faithful, even the pope has assailed those who would make predatory assaults upon his flock. John Paul, in a 1992 speech, called evangelizing Protestants "hungry wolves," telling his bishops that they needed to curb divisions in the church that had allowed outsiders to prey upon the poor and ignorant.

Humberto Belli, the Nicaraguan education minister and a Catholic, expressed displeasure at Protestant proselytizing, saying such groups "appeal to the sentiments (of the poor and uneducated) without a very intellectual focus."

The faithful of Calvary Church flatly reject such claims. "Our growth is not because of fanaticism or ignorance."

Riscaoche said, "We have had support [illegible] My conversion was direct from God. I heard his voice." Riscaoche, 44, said God guided him in 1975 to [illegible] congregation that Yac and [illegible] friends had founded in Almolonga.

In wake of spy scandal, Poles fear domination by Moscow

By Dean E. Murphy
Los Angeles Times

WARSAW—Dispatches from KGB agents were literally coming out of the woodwork when Krzysztof Kozlowski took over as Poland's first non-Communist intelligence chief six years ago.

Soviet spies were so comfortably embedded in the Interior Ministry that special telephone cables were hanging from the molding, installed as a direct link with the Soviet Embassy.

"They were sitting in offices, drinking tea and vodka, and talking with everyone," said Kozlowski, now a Polish senator. "I saw them coming into the building every day."

The cozy relationship ended half a dozen years ago when the country's new Solidarity-led government abruptly slammed the door on the KGB. Poland was reclassified by the Soviets as an unfriendly "Western country," and Russian agents were sent scrambling for information. That meant old-fashioned spying, the tedious working and reworking of personal contacts.

Among those the Russians turned to was Jozef Oleksy, an old friend and former party boss who, with other former Communists, was setting up a democratic successor to the collapsed Polish United Workers' Party.

Those contacts cost Oleksy his job as Polish prime minister last month amid allegations that he knowingly passed classified information to two Russian agents, as recently as last year.

Oleksy denies the charges and says he did not even know the Russians were spies, but he stepped down anyway to clear the air.

Although the exact nature of Oleksy's relations with the Russians is in dispute, the existence of his contacts—and admittedly close ones—is not. Therein lies the greatest trauma of the contentious spying scandal for many Poles.

Guilty of espionage or not, Oleksy has laid open Poland's incessant fear of Russian dominance over the country's political life, something that was supposed to disappear with the iron curtain and the yanked telephone cables at the Interior Ministry.

It has also drawn new attention to the bald Russian propensity to meddle in affairs here, regardless of the changed world order and the political surrender of its Eastern European empire.

In sum, many Poles fear, Oleksy's case demonstrates how helpless Poland remains in shaping its own destiny.

"Unfortunately, the degree of Russian infiltration in Poland is huge," said Antoni Macierewicz, a former interior minister and strident anti-Communist. "The basic element that determines social behavior right now is fear. Fear of Communists. Fear of Russians."

The cozy relationship ended half a dozen years ago when the country's new Solidarity-led government abruptly slammed the door on the KGB. Poland was reclassified by the Soviets as an unfriendly "Western country," and Russian agents were sent scrambling for information.

And the situation is getting more serious, Macierewicz and other Polish intelligence experts say.

As Poland pushes to join the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Polish soil is seething with both Russian agents seeking to derail Warsaw's ambitions and Western intelligence agencies working to secure Poland's permanent break from Moscow and develop business and economic links here.

A former Polish spy was sentenced to nine years in prison in 1994 for spying for Moscow, and two others have been convicted of spying in Poland for German intelligence, although details of the highly sensitive cases were never made public.

A recent article in the respected weekly news magazine *Wprost* alleged that the infiltration runs deep within the Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland, or SDRP, the party of former Communists that now dominates the Polish political scene and forms the core of the governing Democratic Left Alliance.

In a report condemned by SDRP officials, the magazine said that four top party colleagues of Oleksy's were also classified by Russian intelligence as "qualified sources of information" and that more than $1 million in seed money for the party came from Moscow.

"If we were in New Zealand, maybe, the interest of intelligence services would be minimal," said Kozlowski, the former spy chief. "But in this place in Europe, and in this time in history, that is certainly not the case."

Several top Russian spies, meeting with reporters in Moscow on the 75th anniversary of the country's foreign intelligence service, listed NATO—and its proposed enlargement — as a top threat to Russia's national security and a main focus of their intelligence work.

Belarussian President Alexander G. Lukashenko, meanwhile, suggested last month that strategic nuclear weapons could be redeployed on his nation's border with Poland if NATO swallowed up its western neighbor. Newly named Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny M Primakov, a former Russian intelligence chief, said such drastic measures would probably be unnecessary. But he reiterated Moscow's vehement opposition to Poland's NATO bid.

"The biggest problem for Poland today is not our own intelligence services but foreign intelligence services working on our territory," said Jan Parys, a former defense minister who held posts in three Polish governments. "For at least 150 years, it has been known that, from a geopolitical point of view, Poland is the key to Europe. The Russians want to continue to maintain influence here, and the West wants to take Poland into its camp."

Oleksy, in a recent interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, said Poles must work harder to make their case to Russia for Polish entry into NATO, explaining that the motivation is not anti-Russian but a desire to join a club with similar economic and political values.

But even Oleksy, a self-described friend of Moscow, said he was astonished by the degree of penetration by Russian intelligence agents in Poland who reportedly kept files on their contacts with him and assigned him the code name Olin.

Oleksy's alleged spying for Moscow was detected by Polish agents who were tracking the stepped-up activities of Russians, including two Russian spies under diplomatic cover at the Russian Embassy in Warsaw who were friendly with Oleksy before he became prime minister last March.

"I have been a politician supporting the line of good relations with Russia, and if Russian agents are a source of my misfortune, then I am upset by it," Oleksy said. "This has caused very bad anti-Russian feelings in Poland ... and sensational claims about how Russia wants to subjugate Poland again through me."

Asia wired:

A reluctance to share information

IN LESS authoritarian regimes such as Japan, heavy regulation, the low rate of computer use and a reluctance to share information inhibit growth on the Internet beyond a narrow community of government, academic and business users.

"Japan is known as an information gatherer, not an information sender," says Ken Uchikura, president of Pacific Software Publishing, a Japanese company with branches in Tokyo and Seattle.

When information is only reluctantly shared between two divisions of a company or ministry, it is unlikely to be put on the Internet, notes Uchikura.

"The nature of the Internet is that you provide information for free or for a low cost," says Robert Helsing, an East Asian bibliographer at the University of Oregon who manages a Web site offering links to Asian resources. "But they really want to sell their stuff, not give it away."

That's not surprising as there is little tradition of access to public information in most of Asia. Even Japan has few research libraries, for example, and those that do exist are poorly organized, seldom store key public documents and are often inaccessible to the average citizen.

The benefits of Asia tying into the global network of the Internet are clear enough: access to leading-edge research, technology and other information. A Malaysian or Korean business person can tap into the Net, download and freely use a video conferencing system developed at Cornell University, for example.

Many professional societies publish technical papers on the Internet long before the articles appear in print.

China is also looking to the Internet as an important way to offer business and government services. Rather than have regional offices send in paper reports as the United States does, provincial officials will input into Internet databases, says Louis Gallio, executive director of Asia Info Services, a Dallas-based consulting company that works with the Chinese government.

"The Chinese now see (the Internet) as an economic necessity," he says.

And the Net can be an important link for otherwise isolated societies. Tony Rutkowski, formerly president of the Internet Society, a nonprofit group in charge of charting the network's growth, once received a delegation of Western-educated scientists and professionals from the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan. They wanted an Internet link so they could keep up with modern developments.

When Bernard Krisher, co-author of a book with Cambodian President Norodom Sihanouk, sought a way to help the war-ravaged nation break out of its isolation, he chose the Internet. Krisher spent an evening on his laptop soliciting donations from corporations to help connect Cambodian government agencies and universities with the World Wide Web. ■

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CSA

Muslim massacre in Bosnia at last recognized by UN

By Elizabeth Shogren
Los Angeles Times

SREBRENICA, BOSNIA-Herzegovina—After seven months of agonizing uncertainty over the fate of the thousands of men and boys who disappeared after the fall of the "safe area" of Srebrenica, the women refugees from the Muslim enclave were given an answer: "Those that are missing are not alive."

That somber report was relayed by UN human rights envoy Elizabeth Rehn, who pressed the women's case in talks with local Serbian officials during a visit to the town, which was taken by Bosnian Serb fighters in July.

Up to 7,000 Muslim men and boys are presumed to have been killed and dumped into mass graves by Bosnian Serb forces following the capture of Srebrenica, a town nestled in the foothills of eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina. Although the enclave was being protected by UN forces, the peacekeepers were no match for the Bosnian Serb combatants determined to take over the town and flush out all Muslim inhabitants.

The local Bosnian Serb official, Miroslav Deronic, told Rehn that there are no survivors being detained or working in forced labor. The men of Srebrenica, he said, were killed in battles after the capture of the town.

Witnesses, however, have told of cold-blooded massacres —and human rights groups have characterized the deaths as the worst war crime in Europe since World War II. Rehn said that the officials claims that all the men are dead would have to be independently verified.

Seven months after the Serbian siege, Srebrenica looks like a sprawling trash dump, with the remnants of the lives of the tens of thousands of Muslim families expelled from



the town piled in muddy heaps everywhere. Filthy clothes, pieces of furniture and garbage clog the creek that flows through the town. Many of the buildings in town were damaged by shells or burned during the war.

Rehn said the devastation of Srebrenica and the human rights violations that apparently occurred during its capture were in some ways worse than what she witnessed in Beirut. "Of course it raises the question of why must people do things like this to each other," said Rehn, who is from Finland. "I believe this has nothing to do with war, with military actions. This is just abuse of civilian people in a way that is absolutely unacceptable, and hopefully justice will come some day."

Witnesses, however, have told of cold-blooded massacres —and human rights groups have characterized the deaths as the worst war crime in Europe since World War II. Rehn said that the officials claims that all the men are dead would have to be independently verified.

During the Serbian offensive, thousands of Muslim men and boys tried to make their way out of the town through the heavily forested foothills nearby, according to international observers. Other men who had gathered in the nearby village of Potocari were separated from the women and children and detained when their families were evacuated.

Of the thousands, only 200 were located by the International Committee of the Red Cross in Bosnian Serb prisons, and most of those have been released. The fate of the rest has yet to be documented, but international officials estimate that between 6,000 to 7,000 are in mass graves in the region around Srebrenica.

Acting out the agony of their uncertainty, hundreds of women from Srebrenica have been angrily demonstrating in Tuzla, where US forces participating in the international peacekeeping mission are based. They are demanding that the international community solve the mystery of the disappearance of their sons, brothers, fathers and husbands. On at least two occasions, their demonstrations turned violent, with women heaving bricks through windows of the offices of the Red Cross and the local Bosnian government.

Before visiting Srebrenica, Rehn met with representatives of the women, who begged her to check out rumors that some of their men are still alive and working in forced labor.

On her tour of Srebrenica, she stopped at two of 10 addresses where the women believe the men might be. There was no sign of them at either place, one of which was a school and the other a store.

When journalists suggested that the stops were ridiculous because the local authorities could easily move any captives before her arrival, Rehn explained that her mission was an emotional one because she felt deep sorrow for the women.

"I am really trying to help those women, so they can have as honest answers as possible," Rehn said. "Sometimes you have to make very unrational decisions if you want to help someone."

She received a promise from local officials that the women be allowed to travel to Srebrenica to conduct their own search.

Last week, she met with the women in Tuzla to report what she had learned.

Fatima Huseinovic, the leader of the women, said after talking with Rehn that the news of her efforts on their behalf had provided "comfort and bigger hope" to the women. Although initially saddened to learn that the Serbs had said there are no Muslim men alive in Srebrenica, the women did not abandon hope.

"It was hard, but at the same moment I thought they must be somewhere else," Huseinovic added.

Without Rehn's intervention, gaining access to Srebrenica might have been impossible for the women. The area has been off limits to Muslims since July. ■

Russian coal-miners union suspends strike

The miners have long been a powerful political force in Russia and helped bring Yeltsin to power in 1991.

By David Hoffman
The Washington Post

MOSCOW—The Russian coal-miners union suspended its two-day nationwide strike after Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin signed a $2.2 billion financing package of fixed subsidies and overdue wages for the troubled coal industry.

But the miners, wary of unfulfilled past government promises, vowed to strike again if the money is not provided by 1 March, and they threatened to aim a political punch at President Boris Yeltsin.

While full details of the financing package were not disclosed, it appeared to be the latest example of Yeltsin's government responding to social tensions with spending commitments that could later fuel inflation.

In debating whether to extend Russia a new $9 billion loan, Western economists are watching closely to see whether Russia maintains tight monetary discipline, which last year helped bring stability to the ruble and hold inflation to its lowest level since the collapse of the Soviet Union four years ago.

But since the Communist Party capitalized on public disenchantment in the parliamentary election in December, Yeltsin, who is expected to announce this month his plan to seek re-election, has made a rash of costly spending promises without saying how they would be paid for. He vowed to establish a "president's social fund" to contain a month's wages for everyone in the country, at a cost of more than $6 billion. He said he would send $3.4 billion in cash and $1 billion in foreign credits to aid the Chechen economy, which has been wrecked by the Russian war against separatists there. He also accelerated pension payments at a cost of $2.4 billion and promised to increase student grants after April 1 for $63 million.

"It's time to pay more attention to social questions,"

Chernomyrdin told reporters Saturday before leaving for a holiday at the Black Sea resort of Sochi. "In February, we have to resolve all these problems, to pay wages, pensions, students' grants in time. We have to ease the social tension. But the course of market reforms will go on. I don't think there is someone who will have the courage to change it."

But the reformist economics minister, Yevgeny Yasin, said there is no way Yeltsin can fulfill massive new spending commitments. "If the president embarked on that road, he would find himself in a very dangerous role," he said, according to the Interfax news agency.

The miners had said they were owed about $200 million in back pay. The rest of the money pledged by Chernomyrdin appears to be this year's planned subsidies to the government-owned coal monopoly. The government also promised to fulfill its earlier agreements on wages, and to pay the industry by a fixed schedule for at least the first half of the year.

In the Arctic mining region of Vorkuta, union leaders also said they won a pledge from industry management not to raise coal prices for the first three months of this year and to consider restructuring the coal industry, which has remained largely unaltered since Soviet days.

"Everything hinges on promises alone, again," said Yuri Vishnevsky, a Vorkuta union leader, according to Interfax. "If the miners are cheated this time, too, they will start a strike prompted by the hopelessness of their situation, not by decisions taken by their unions, before the presidential elections."

The miners have long been a powerful political force in Russia and helped bring Yeltsin to power in 1991.

The miners, the coal monopoly and its customers have been locked in a web of overdue debts and non-payments. According to a document that the miners submitted to the Russian parliament Friday, the government's debt to the miners is 20 percent of the total owed to them _ the rest is due from industry customers such as steel mills and electric power plants, which themselves are locked in the cycle of debts and non-payments.

Regardless of the source of debt, however, the deepening morass of non-payments has made the miners—and millions of other Russian workers—skeptical of promises about pay. Chief among the miners' demands was a fixed schedule of payments to the industry.

"Everything that I've promised, will be fulfilled," said Chernomyrdin, referring to the back pay. But he also alluded to a "problem" of credits to the coal industry, saying the government would provide them only for "concrete projects of the coal-mining enterprises." He did not elaborate. ■

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At edge of peace, will Angola return to war?

Diplomats say both the government and the UNITA forces accuse each other of duplicity and that hard-liners on both sides may be secretly preparing for another round of war rather than submit to the power-sharing arrangement envisioned in the 1994 accord.

By Bob Drogin
Los Angeles Times

VILA NOVA, Angola—Past bombed-out buildings and burned-out cars, near grim skull-and-crossbones signs for roadside minefields, a dusty cluster of military tents here hold the hopes for lasting peace in Africa's longest civil war.

But Angola has dashed such hopes before. And despite a shaky 15-month cease-fire after two decades of death and devastation, it may be doing it again.

Jonas Savimbi, the mercurial leader of the rebel UNITA forces, has promised to deliver 16,500 soldiers and their weapons—or about a third of his army—by today, Thursday to the demobilization camp here and at three other sites run by the United Nations.

But only 1,600 men have surrendered since mid-November, and many arrived barefoot and in rags, looking suspiciously like village youths and peasant farmers.

"We are ready," said Molly Kamara, the UN administrator at Vila Nova, surveying scores of empty tents. "But it is going very slowly."

Today's deadline is critical because the UN Security Council will vote that day on whether to renew the mandate of what is the United Nations' largest peacekeeping force, now that NATO has taken over military operations in the battered remnants of the Yugoslav federation.

The 6,625-member force of blue berets—as the UN troops are known—military observers and others was sent to Angola last year to verify implementation of a peace accord signed in November 1994 by the government of President Jose Eduardo dos Santos and Savimbi's UNITA, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola.

An extension of several months is likely for the $1 million-a-day effort. But the UN special representative in Angola, Alioune Blondin Beye, warned that "the international community rightly has become impatient after months of stalling and broken promises."

The last serious fighting ended 21 December when the government, under heavy pressure from Washington and other Western powers, halted a surprise offensive against UNITA positions in the north. But the two armies remain fully armed, and officials fear that the fragile truce could quickly collapse.

"The current situation cannot last," Beye said in an interview at UN headquarters outside Luanda, the capital. "So either they change by peaceful means, going by their agreement, or they return to confrontation."

In the past, Beye has often called the peace process "irreversible" and was publicly upbeat. No longer.

"When the soldiers are disarmed, then we can call this irreversible," he said in frustration. "In Angola, there are always doubts. We are never sure of anything. That's why the conflict has lasted so many years."

Diplomats say both the government and the UNITA forces accuse each other of duplicity and that hard-liners on both sides may be secretly preparing for another round of war rather than submit to the power-sharing arrangement envisioned in the 1994 accord.

"What we are seeing is the legacy of two decades of fighting and killing," US Ambassador Donald Steinberg said. "There is tremendous mistrust on both sides."

Michel Dufour, head of an International Committee of the Red Cross delegation, noted that UNITA has surrendered mostly assault rifles and small arms, not the mortars, tanks and artillery believed hidden in the bush.

"So far, the weapons being handed in are not credible," Dufour said. To be sure, Angola has come a long way in the last year. Before the cease-fire, the United Nations estimated, 1,000 people were dying every day from war-related injuries, starvation and disease.

One of the largest and most expensive relief efforts in history was mounted to feed and shelter about three million internal refugees—nearly one-third the country's population. About 1.1 million people are still provided with food.

Most humanitarian supplies now move by truck convoy, not planes, as dynamited bridges are repaired and major roads are cleared of countless land mines and unexploded ordinance. In some areas, farmers rush in behind the mine-removal crews to plant seeds.

But life has hardly returned to normal. Many cities and towns are in ruins after bombings, sieges and house-to-house combat. Roving bands of soldiers and police have turned to banditry. Infant mortality rates remain among the world's highest.

"We have no war, but there is no peace either," said Andrew Toh, director of the UN World Food Program's largest relief program.

Angola first went to war in 1960 when liberation groups tried to oust the Portuguese colonial rulers. When independence was granted in 1975, full-scale war erupted among the competing forces.

The country soon was a Cold War battleground. The United States sent covert aid, and South Africa invaded, to prop up the nominally pro-West UNITA. The then-Marxist government was backed by Cuban troops and aid from the Soviet Bloc.

A peace pact led to UN-supervised elections in 1992. Although both sides agreed to demobilize and disarm their armies, neither did. And when Savimbi lost the election, he alleged fraud and ordered his troops back to war. ■



Angola's Unita Leader JONAS SAVIMBI

FEBRUARY 1996
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Fathers and daughters measure the motherland

Russians still living for tomorrow

History's bills weighing heavily on the future

By Alexander Pumpianski

REPORTING FROM MOSCOW

THERE IS NO prophet in this land and, reflecting on the assignment received from *The WorldPaper*, I understood the reason for it. A prophet is a person who sees through centuries, while people want to know what will happen tomorrow. Even God Almighty cannot answer this question, therefore people resort to his services only on rare, critical occasions.

But I am ready to become a prophet, and cast a glance into the future of my native land a couple of decades from now. Incidentally, this is not so hard. It is much harder to say what will happen to us tomorrow.

As a prophet, I am rather optimistic. There is no way back for my country. She has trodden the old path to the very end, exhausted; she has drunk to the last drop, like a bitter cup. The end of communism—which lasted for only a brief historical moment, Gorbachev's five-year-long *perestroika*—and the fall of the empire which crashed literally over one day are unmistakable signs of this. In addition to a political firmament that went mad, its earthly support, the communist economy, tumbled into hell under us.

People have made their choice. They want to live a normal life; the kind of life people live in the West. Unfortunately, this is impossible

Only a short time ago the Soviet Union proudly challenged the West, and even laid claims on the leading position on the world arena. Sputnik and the quantity of steel manufactured by it, not to speak of the tanks it produced, seemed to substantiate these claims. However, not by tanks alone is a state alive. The communist economy proved unable to feed the population, supply it with clothes and meet its most elementary needs. It proved incapable of evolving naturally.

There was only one way out of this unnatural, forced historical deadlock where the communist rule had driven the country: the return to, reunion with or, if you prefer, reconversion to the world economic system.

Voting every day

Today, a kind of instinctive, "grass roots" level consensus has formed in Russian society. This is a natural phenomenon. People not only vote in parliamentary or presidential elections once every few years, they have to make choices every day—how, and in what way, shall they earn their daily bread? Members of the new entrepreneurial class have made a decisive choice, and they are not alone. According to official statistics, more than half of the workforce is employed outside the state sector, in spheres where salaries are higher. The inefficient, money-losing and inhumane state-owned economy is dying, and this process is irreversible.

A very clear vote takes place in the consumption sphere every day. The shops are full of imported goods, from soap and detergents to household electronics, from chickens and salami to cars. People prefer real—i.e. foreign-made—goods. Add tourism's embrace of millions of people, something which was only a dream several years ago, and all doubts disappear. People have made their choice. They want to live a normal life; the kind of life people live in the West.

Unfortunately, this is impossible.

For this to become possible, a normal economy is necessary. What we have in Russia is, firstly, a monstrous abnormality. Secondly, it is not an economy at all.

Three-quarters of Soviet industry was involved in military production, directly or indirectly. If one assumes that cannons are more important than people, and that people are nothing more than cannon fodder, then everything becomes quite logical. A brontosaur could be taken as a symbol of Soviet industry. However, this comparison is incorrect in one respect. Brontosaurs died out, being unable to survive the period of the great ice ages. But the Soviet economy, oriented to the military industrial complex, failed to survive the end of the Cold War.

I will not enumerate all that the Soviet military industrial complex yielded in unbelievable quantities. It is clear that in the interest of Russian society, the lion's share of these products should be manufactured no more. However, this spells economic crisis for whole cities and regions, the termination of research and development activities, the loss of millions of jobs and other social problems.

While Soviet heavy industry failed to survive the end of the Cold War, Soviet light industry collapsed with the fall of the Iron Curtain. Not only was it unable to fill the consumer basket with even the most modest range of goods and foodstuffs. It turned out that, because of low quality, none of the commodities manufactured by it could withstand competition from foreign manufacturers. The children of Russian shoemakers have long since stopped wearing Russian-made shoes.

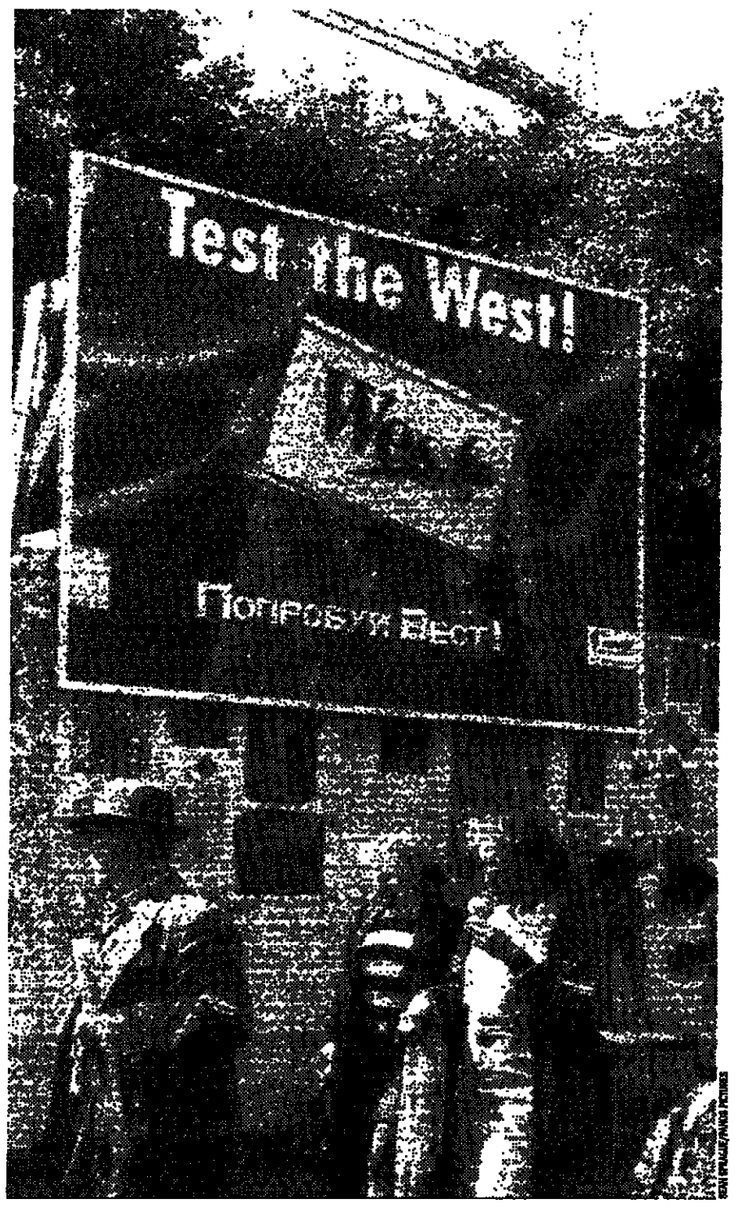
To live in capitalism

A society which is trying to become normal has inherited this economy, an economy oriented not to peace but to war, to serving global imperial ends rather than such trifles as human needs. This inhuman state-controlled economy must be converted into a real economy, oriented to the market and, consequently, to people. Such tasks are not achieved overnight. Strictly speaking, no society has ever had to solve a problem like this.

Now, a generation of post-Soviet people wants to live in capitalism. Capitalism, this new metaphor of happiness, is a less unattainable dream. However, the trouble is that the consequences of the communist utopia must be coped with first, while people want happiness here and now. And they don't want to pay bills written out by history.

The paradox of the situation is that debts were incurred by autocratic communist rulers, while it is the people who have to pay them. These people have been fed on promises for such a long time that they cannot wait two more decades. They are ready to trust new promises, even if they are only the same old communist ones—made by people who tell them that before democracy came, people had jobs and all were equal. ◍

ALEXANDER PUMPIANSKI IS *The WorldPaper*'S ASSOCIATE EDITOR FOR RUSSIA AND EDITOR OF THE MOSCOW-BASED *Novoe Vremia*.



Russians have rejected the destiny envisioned by Lenin and imposed by Stalin. They are well on the way to rejecting the one mapped out for them by the West's capitalist democracies. Now two generations of Russians are faced with the task of deciding what they do want—and then making it happen



Chaotic freedom offers youth a chance to live

By Seda Pumpianski

REPORTING FROM MOSCOW

IN TODAY'S RUSSIA, after the fall of the Soviet Union and collapse of the communist system, the traditional difference between "fathers and sons" turns out to be even more radical. I am the daughter, and I remember that our peaceful family suppers became permanent battlefields in 1990-91 as we started having emotional political arguments with my father about Gorbachev. This was already the very end of *perestroika*.

"Gorbi is the greatest historical figure, and it's a pity that this society is still not able to appreciate what he has done," was my father's general position.

"I know, and I'll tell you more; nobody doubts that, but why doesn't he want to occupy his place in the historical mausoleum? Don't you see that he already reached his limits, and is absolutely not able to do anything more?," we responded.

"That's because things still can't be said directly in this country," countered our father. "There are very few democrats, and even Gorbi's position is not solid because army and central committees, KGB and regional *obkoms*—all this still exists."

"And what about people? People have been waiting for one year, three years, but five years is really enough. People can't wait any more. First you eat and only then discuss, don't you? The country needs economic changes."

"But nobody knows what to do with the socialist economy. And maybe it is still not the moment," said our father.

"What do you mean, 'not the moment?' I am not going to start living in 20 years. I want to live now. I am young today," I told him.

Now I am 30, and I don't doubt the great historical role played by Gorbachev, but still I have to acknowledge that the most difficult period in my life occurred during 1990-91. For two simple reasons: firstly, the system of socialist distribution reached its nadir, when even the two most basic things for any Russian—milk and bread—disappeared from the shops; second, two previous generations (our parents and our grandfathers) sacrificed their lives for some unknown and inaccessible future. *Perestroika* brought with it one great discovery: that "the main sense of life is just to live." So we wanted to live.

Two previous generations sacrificed their lives for some unknown and inaccessible future. Perestroika brought with it one great discovery: that "the main sense of life is just to live." So we wanted to live

For me personally, Yeltsin has always been much less attractive than Gorbi. But I also give him some historical credit as the person who managed to start economic reforms in Russia—even if they were painful and wild, even if the main reason for them was a desire to do something that his rival Gorbi never managed to do. The logic was right. If your family situation is unbearable, one day you divorce. It's bad, but sometimes it leads to better things.

The terrible "shock therapy," that started with the famous liberalization of prices on January 2, 1992, was that necessary divorce—the only option left at that moment. The body was almost dead. The country was empty. I have often heard—from very different people with very different incomes—"It's awful that the price went up again, but still it's better to have than not to have. Let it be expensive, but be."

I also keep asking myself: "And what is really better? To be in some country where everybody is promised wonderful, paradise-like islands? Or a country where everybody is thrown into the water, and those who can swim are safe and those who can't are on their own?"

It may be the most horrible thing in the world, and it is definitely far removed from the ideas of humanity, democracy and human rights, but still I am afraid that I personally choose the second way. Maybe because I still think that I am strong. Maybe because I believe that at least some will be safe.

My generation, born into and growing up in the atmosphere of terrible Brezhnevian stagnation, was always looking at our unpractical and idealistic parents, typical children of the 1960s. Somehow we continued living with their ideals, being unable to create anything new. But then we changed. We became extremely cynical, wanting to protect ourselves from the false illusions. We started counting up things according to the way we saw life, and we soon made our choice—chaos is terrible, but chaotic freedom is better than a well organized military camp. It's hard to live through the fall of the last empire and then live inside its ruins, and it's very important not to become a ruin yourself. Something even more important if you are a young lady.

It may seem a paradox, but young women in modern Russia exhibit both more independence and more dependence. On the one hand, a new image of a smart, self-made businesswoman has appeared. Women earn more, travel more, get more opportunities in professional fields and are starting to support themselves. Some of them (though still very few) are even getting into politics.

On the other hand, Russia being an extremely traditional society, where feminism almost never existed, many women discovered after the fall of the Soviet regime that they want to become just women—to be feminine, beautiful and well-dressed, to be protected by rich, strong men and have nice, easy, work-free lives, to create families and have children. You can see such women at any of the Moscow fashion shows.

Quite opposite ideals of life, of course, but maybe there is one point in which they coincide—both are quite far from the famous "Russian babushka." This image, especially popular in the West, meant much more than just physical appearance. It meant a certain way of life and a certain mentality: sacrificing your life to something that never existed and getting nothing at the end of life, never having normal living conditions or material things and not being able to take care of yourself.

Russia is an incredible place where things can always get worse, and on very rare occasions better. If it seems to you that things cannot be worse, never believe it. How many times have I remembered this truth since 1985, and I am not at all pessimistic. But now, even if many more surprises are awaiting us in the near future, I still think that we have managed to touch the bottom. At least in the city where I live, in Moscow. ◍

SEDA PUMPIANSKI WRITES FOR THE MADRID-BASED SPANISH NEWSPAPER *El País*. SHE IS THE DAUGHTER OF ALEXANDER PUMPIANSKI.

STILL LIVING FOR TOMORROW

The difference between a regional power and a superpower seems slight in Bucharest

East Europeans share their bed with a restless elephant

By Silviu Brucan

REPORTING FROM BUCHAREST

WHILE THE WORLD is still wondering about the amazing results of Russia's parliamentary elections last December, the campaign for its June presidential elections has already started. Since geopolitics has placed Romania in the neighborhood of giant Russia, we are reminded of an old Indian proverb: "When you are in bed with an elephant, you better watch which way he turns." Indeed, the presidential elections, more than the parliamentary ones, will tell us which way the elephant will turn.

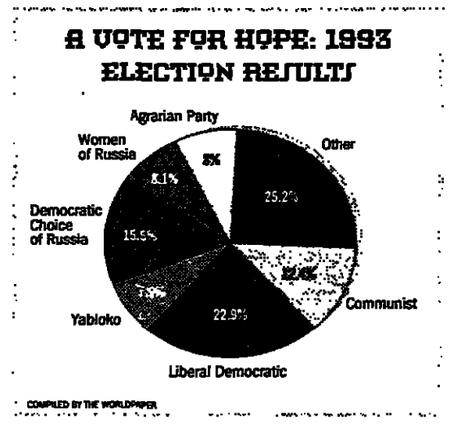
In Russia, a strong presidential system is a historic necessity. The new constitution provides specifically for such a system, allowing President Boris Yeltsin to state that, in spite of the communists' electoral success, Russia's reform policy will stay on course.

Never throughout their history have Russians experienced a period of democracy. Historian P. Miliukov noted in 1994 that, "Whereas in the West the social organization conditioned the state system, in Russia it was the state that influenced the social organization." The state becoming the main agent of change. Even in recent years, most of the steps toward establishing a market economy, liberalizing prices and privatizing state enterprises were done by presidential decree.

But decreed or otherwise, this economic reform has resulted not only in falling material standards for most Russians, but also in a degradation of living conditions—indeed, in how long they live. The mortality rate has risen 40 percent since 1990. The recent weakening of state control, instead of giving rise to a civil society, has fostered crime, drug addiction and lawlessness on an alarming scale. Hence, there is a wide popular demand for the restoration of law and order. Above all, Russian national pride has suffered a terrible trauma.

The sudden downfall from the superpower status equal only to that of the US to present-day Russia has left the giant nation looking like a poor relative, occupying a spare chair at the dinner of the rich nations. This Yeltsin could not ignore. He changed his rhetoric after the 1993 elections, claiming that Russia is a great power with its own sphere of influence and rejected the role of a minor partner to the West. Now he will do the same, but even more so.

Here is where Russia departs from the East European nations. The Western assumption that the market economy, combined with democratic pluralism, will tame the Russian bear, allowing the West to steer the future course of Russia, has proved deceptively wrong. The votes of 1993 and 1995 gave expression to a profound popular dissatisfaction with present policies. Indeed, whereas the West's control of the world economic system's "commanding heights" may compel East European nations to play by the rules of the world market, the same forces generate, in a great power like Russia, the will to resist.



Make no mistake, most of those who participated in last December's elections are not just "a bunch of nostalgic pensioners yearning for the communist past." Communism as a dictatorial, repressive system is dead politically. As a rigid and inefficient state planning system, it is dead economically. But it lives socially, its message of job security and social justice still resonating in the souls and minds of people. This is why so many voted for the communists.

This does not mean that the Communist party wants to bring back the old system. It means, however, that Russian society will never be Westernized. The Russians cherish communitarian values rather than the Western cult of individual liberty. They are neither pragmatic nor very industrious, but are endowed with a unique spirituality and sense of mission. In brief, they feel they are different and have a destiny of their own. The political leader who will chart such a course before the nation will win the June presidential elections.

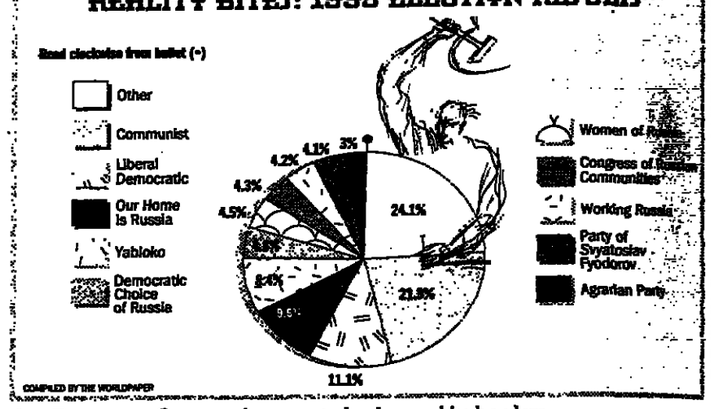
Having said this, let us now take a realistic look at Russia today, for only on that basis can we see where the country is going. It appears that, after five years of nervous and painful sliding, the economy seems to have bottomed out and may be on the brink of growing for the first time since 1991. Inflation is coming down from stratospheric heights and the ruble is more or less holding its value after plummeting wildly for several years. Many shops and restaurants that used to accept "only dollars," are now happy with rubles. With its tremendous riches in oil, gas, diamonds and gold, Russia might get on its feet around the year 2000.

The noisy speeches about restoring the USSR have very little reverberation in the other republics. Moscow's attempts to reestablish its politico-military domination have failed—and will continue to do so. In international relations one can't make love by force, particularly when you are dealing with nations that discovered their Islamic identity. But there are good chances that a sort of common market will take shape: Belarus is already in, to be followed—eventually—by the Ukraine and others attracted by Russia's energy resources and an internal market for their products that are noncompetitive on world markets.

In Europe, the emergence of Russia as a great power might have a paradoxical effect on the European Union's policy. During the Cold War, as part of its effort to contain the Soviet Union, the European Community granted substantial economic aid to its less developed members such as Spain, Portugal and Greece to uplift their economies to community standards. This has not been replicated with the East European associate-members. During the next five years the 100 million people of Eastern Europe will get less than tiny Portugal, with only 9 million people, to modernize their economies. But with the Russian bear reasserting itself, the European Union will have to drastically change its parsimonious Eastern policy. So, paradoxically, the integration of East Europe into the European Union will depend on Russia becoming a strong challenger.

Finally, in the world at large Russia may become a regional power rather than a global one. However assertive its rhetoric, new leaders must reckon with a country lacking the assets of a modern great power. Right now, Moscow can hardly pay, feed and shelter its armed forces, and for at least a decade it will remain too weak to re-establish a military or economic presence much beyond its borders.

Russia does possess a tremendous nuclear capability. Although this is a major bargaining chip in international forums dealing with peace and security and in bilateral relations with the US, it is not enough to make Russia a major player in a world in which economic assets rather than military force are the currency of geopolitics. ●



SILVIU BRUCAN IS *The WorldPaper's* ASSOCIATE EDITOR FOR EASTERN EUROPE.

State's historic commitment to Siberia and its riches seems to have lapsed

Northerners given the cold shoulder

By Artur Chilingarov

REPORTING FROM YAKUTSK

RUSSIA'S NORTHERN territories account for 60 percent of its overall land holdings and are a very important component of its economy. Currently, they produce the greater part of its oil, gold and diamonds, and are likely to provide for up to 70 percent of the total output of its gas between 2000-2005. One might argue that it is only this region, known as the Extreme North, that keeps Russia's crisis-ridden economy afloat.

The Extreme North of Russia, in particular its Arctic zone, is also of strategic importance to this country in terms of defense. Its development is really extremely important for the success of reform in Russia. However, the area teeters on the edge of survival.

Its problems include:

► A drastic fall in industrial production. Its volume has decreased by more than half since 1990. The total number of aircraft operating in the Extreme North fell to a third of its previous total, which has led to further isolation of the region and produced a sharp decrease in both cargo and passenger transport.

► Inflation and non-payment of wages are both on the rise. The region's already high prices are still going up while geologists, builders, teachers, medical personnel and other employees do not get their wages on time.

► An investment crisis. The area's volume of capital investments has fallen by a third. At the same time, the greater part of the available capital was used for non-industrial construction.

In addition to these factors, the lack of federal investment in this part of Russia has contributed in some cases to the economic problems. Over decades, great resources were spent to develop and explore Russia's Extreme North, and create the infrastructure it needed. All that effort could now be lost forever, if the current crisis continues rather than recedes. Entire regions are on the verge of economic paralysis.

Considering that it is impossible to survive in the Extreme North without fuel and foodstuffs, evacuation is a real issue. But to where?

Russia, in its current state, is unable to provide a decent standard of living for residents of central and southern Russia. And many Northerners have nowhere else to go. Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, leaders of some newly sovereign states have made clear that, since the Extreme North belongs to Russia, it is Russia's task to take care of their inhabitants.

It also appears that Russia does not have any serious policy drawn up to guide foreign development of the Extreme North. Regions rich in natural resources, which are currently being developed by big overseas companies, get nothing for these resources—and are very unlikely to get anything in the near future.

However, one thing is absolutely clear: the Russian North needs a master

All these circumstances have forced the State Duma to support the initiative of the Northern deputies and begin to carry out legislative activities to protect the region. In this respect, the lower house has actually stepped into the shoes of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation, which used to pay special attention to this problem.

But problems remain. Deputies of the northern territories repeatedly state that, amidst the difficult conditions created by transition to a market economy, the largest of Russia's national regions has virtually been abandoned—nobody from the federal government pays any attention to its needs and bears some part of the responsibility for what is happening there.

Under the current circumstances, two types of administrative tasks are combined. I am talking about pure economic life-support activities in the northern territories, in particular getting vital supplies to the North, and the development of a national and regional policy which first and foremost stipulates a balance of interests between the Federation and its members.

Although I have deep respect for the Nationalities Ministry, given the current state of things it seems that they treat the problem of economic support for the Extreme North as a secondary task. That is why I support a proposal to set up a full Ministry for Northern Affairs, such as those already functioning in such northern countries as Canada and Norway.

Such a ministry would need to be vested with extensive rights and powers. It must be headed by competent experts with extensive knowledge of the north and its problems. Otherwise, this promising idea will be blocked from implementation as, unfortunately, is quite common. Regulation of the new, market-driven economic relations might be one of the basic functions of the new ministry, especially in Russia's Extreme North.

It is common knowledge that the current flourishing of the market element just adds to numerous difficulties experienced by the Extreme North. That is why I would like to remind you that the exploration of Russia's northern regions goes back to the 1920s.

The process was professionally handled by the powerful *Glavsevmorput* state organization, which controlled icebreaker and cargo fleets, aviation routes, a network of meteorological stations, power enterprises and the means of transport needed for the delivery of every necessary article. Of course, all this was based on strict and sometimes unwisely centralized principles and a related system of administrative command. However, since the system proved itself then, its experience can still be used today.

I am not talking about a need to revive everything that no longer exists. Market relations currently being born in Russia cannot be stopped and this would, indeed, be unwise. We know what the former system of administrative command did to the national economy, and its consequences.

However, one thing is absolutely clear: the Russian North needs a master. This is an acute question which must be solved without delay. ●

ARTUR CHILINGAROV IS DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE STATE DUMA OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION. THIS ARTICLE IS COURTESY OF THE RUSSIAN INFORMATION AGENCY NOVOSTI.



Without government help, the natural resources of Russia's Extreme North may be lost to the rest of the country because of inadequate infrastructure

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ENGLISH PROGRAM

SATURDAY

2:00—Moomins
2:30—Wish Kid
3:00—Harry And The Hendersons
3:25—Blue Heelers
4:00—Okavango
5:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Major Dad
8:00—The Stamp of Greatness
8:25—Hawaii Five-O
9:10—The Glass Virgin
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—A Journey Across The Land Of Islam
10:45—Feature Film: *In A Stranger's Hand*, starring: Robert Urich & Mogan Gallagher
A stolen child... A desperate woman... A deadly conspiracy
11:50—Mancuso FBI

SUNDAY

2:00—The Flintstones
2:30—Disney's Aladdin
3:00—Family Playhouse
3:30—Islamic History In Jordan
4:00—Okavango
5:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Keeping up Appearances
8:00—Oriental Rugs
8:25—Hawaii Five-O
9:25—Women of the World
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Counterstrike
11:15—The American Chart Show
12:00—Stay Lucky

MONDAY

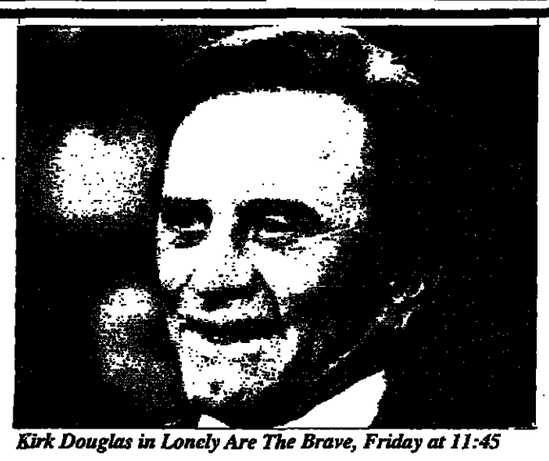
2:00—Bonkers
2:30—Richie Rich
3:00—Playabout
3:15—Bustin Loose
3:40—Animals of the Mediterranean
4:10—Okavango
5:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—McHale's Navy
8:00—Inventions
8:25—Hawaii Five-O
9:10—Russia: The Missing Years
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—A Journey Across The Land Of Islam
10:40—Perfect Scoundrels
11:10—*Taurus Rising*
12:00—Ellen

TUESDAY

2:00—Captain Planet
2:30—Johnny Quest
2:50—Iris- The Happy Professor
3:00—Spirit of Adventure
3:40—Scientific Eye
4:10—Okavango
5:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—You Bet Your Life
8:00—Oriental Rugs
8:25—Hawaii Five-O
9:10—Harry
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Three Sovereigns For Sarah
11:15— Feature Film: *Death in Small Doses*, starring: Richard Thomas & Tess Harper

WEDNESDAY

2:00—The Flintstones
2:30—Speed Racer
3:00—Islamic History In Jordan
3:30—Islamic Antiquities In Jordan
4:00—Okavango
5:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headline
7:35—Evening Shade
8:00—Oriental Rugs
8:25—Hawaii Five-O
9:10—Horizon/ Too Big, Too Soon



Kirk Douglas in Lonely Are The Brave, Friday at 11:45

10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Airwolf
11:20—The Silk Road
12:30— Second Thoughts

THURSDAY

1:00—Fireman Sam
1:10—Disney's Aladdin
1:30—The Legends of Treasure Island
2:00—My Secret Identity
2:15—NBA
3:15—The new leave it to Beaver
3:40—Adventures of the Old West
4:30—Gillette World Sport
5:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Keeping Up Appearances
8:10—Islam In America
8:15—The Album Show
9:10— Pride And Prejudice
10:00—News At Ten
10:25—A Journey Across The Land Of Islam
10:45—Feature Film: *Who Will love My Children*, starring: Ana Margaret & Cathryn Damon
12:00—Matlock

FRIDAY

1:00—The Little Mermaid
1:30—Iris The Happy Professor
1:40—Lift Off
2:05—See How They Grow
2:15—Bush School
2:30—Wonder Why
3:00—Feature Film: *The Time Game*, starring: Pat Bishop & Simon Chivers
4:30—Give Us a Clue
5:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Short Story Cinema
8:00—Sea Quest
8:45—America's Funniest People
9:10— Widows
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—A Journey Across The Land Of Islam
10:45—Second Chances
11:45—Classic Movie: *Lonely Are The Brave*, starring: Kirk Douglas & Gena Rowlands

PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS

SAMEDI

5:00—Documentaire
«Du soleil et du vent»
5:30—Série
Les compagnons de l'aventure
«Les mégazèbres et l'énigme du sphynx»
6:00—Série
Chateau Vallon
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine
Faut pas rêver
«USA, l'or rouge du nouveau monde»

DIMANCHE

5:00—Magazine
Montagne
5:30—Série
Les compagnons de l'aventure
«Les mégazèbres: drôles d'oiseaux»
6:00—Magazine
Envoyé spécial
«Le passage»
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine
Sports et musique

LUNDI

5:00—Magazine
Nimbus
5:30—Série
Les compagnons de l'aventure
«Lola et les sardines: les chocolats»
5:50—Magazine
C'est pas sorcier
6:20—Divertissement
L'école des fans
«Andre Verchuren»
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine
Cinq sur cinq

MARDI

5:00—Magazine
Montagne
5:30—Série
Les compagnons de l'aventure
« Lola et les sardines course au trésor»
6:00—Magazine médical
Savoir plus santé
«La maison de tous les dangers»
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine
Ushuaïa

MERCREDI

5:00—Magazine
Planète en équation
5:30—Série
Les dames de la côte
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine
Sports et musique

JEUDI

5:00—Documentaire
«Le ramadan au Maroc»
5:30—Variétés
Taratata
«Gilbert Montagné»
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine
Archimède

VENDREDI

5:00—Magazine
E=M6
5:30—Téléfilm
«Elle voulait faire du cinéma»
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine
Allo la terre

Programs are subject to change by JTV



Cinema

"LORD OF ILLUSIONS" (MGM/UA, $97.51): Horror master Clive Barker (*"Hellraiser"*) strikes again as writer and director of this supernatural tale, casting *"Quantum Leap"* alumnus Scott Bakula as a detective hired by a woman (Famke Janssen, the villainess in *"GoldenEye"*) to watch over her magician husband (Kevin J. O'Connor). Of course, matters go haywire. ** (R and unrated versions: AS, P, V)

"THE COURTYARD" (Republic,): Andrew McCarthy (*"Weekend at Bernie's"*) stars in this suspense-drama — first presented on Showtime — as an architect newly relocated from Manhattan to Southern California, where he becomes involved in the probe of a pizza-deliverer's murder. Suspects are plentiful, and they include the woman (Madchen Amick) to whom the newcomer has taken a shine. ** (R: AS, P, V)

HELD OVER: *"BEASTMASTER III: THE EYE OF BRAXUS"* (MCA/Universal,); Marc Singer returns as the warrior in this made-for-video sequel to the earlier sword-and-sorcery adventures, the first of which is a cable-TV perennial. Sandra Hess (*"Encino Man"*) plays his female comrade in battle; also appearing are former *"Beverly Hills 90210"* semi-regular Casper Van Dien and Tony Todd (*"Candyman"*). ** (PG-13: AS, P, V)

"BORN WILD" (Columbia/TriStar,): Though Brooke Shields gets top billing in this drama, the title doesn't apply primarily to her character. Instead, it's a reference to a female leopard being protected by John Varty — a renowned conservationist who appears as himself — while Shields plays a novice documentary maker who's on her maiden assignment. Martin Sheen also stars. ** (Not rated: P, V)

"BURNT BY THE SUN" (Columbia/TriStar,): The most recent Academy Award winner for Best Foreign Language Film, writer, director and star Nikita Mikhalkov's drama — a Russian-French co-production, presented in Russian dialog with English subtitles — focuses on a man whose life is shattered by the interference of the secret police. Oleg Menchikov also appears. *** (R: AS, P, V)

COMING SOON: *"JADE"* (Paramount, Jan. 23): Linda Fiorentino plays the lady who stirs trouble between David Caruso and Chazz Palminteri in director William Friedkin's melodrama. (R)

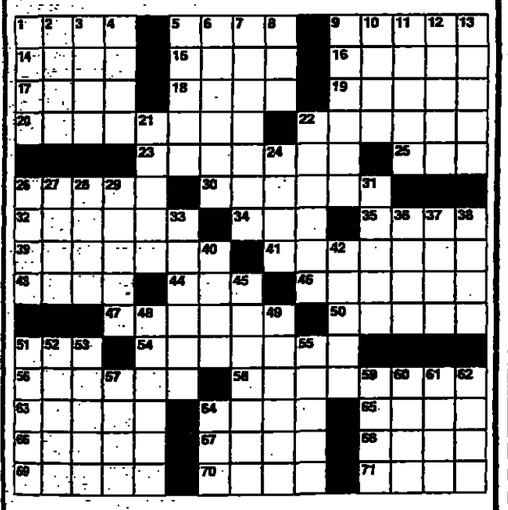
"WATERWORLD" (MCA/Universal, Jan. 23): More celebrated for its cost than anything else last summer, the at-sea action epic stars Kevin Costner as its hero. (PG-13)

"DESPERADO" (Columbia/TriStar, Jan. 30): Antonio Banderas plays the weapons-skilled antihero in director Robert Rodriguez' remake of his own "El Mariachi." *(R)*

FAMILY-VIEWING GUIDE KEY: *AS, adult situations; N, nudity; P, profanity; V, violence; GV, particularly graphic violence.*

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS
1 Acting Ladd
5 In a frenzy
9 Relating to birth
14 Picture section, for short
15 Knowledge
16 Greek letter
17 Black
18 Algerian port
19 Poisonous
20 Kind of
22 Royal home
23 Fish
25 Pulpit speech: abbr.
28 Lessen
30 Flew high
32 Englishman of noble birth
34 Blue Eagle letters
35 Fencing weapon
39 Team athletes
41 Certain stands
43 Dry
44 Likely
46 Famed inventor
47 Esteem
50 Isolated
51 Race unit
54 Ruler
56 Salem's state
58 Pale horse
63 French painter
64 Dotted, in heraldry
65 Scent
66 Soap plant
67 Romanov, for one
68 Dermal hole
69 Alights
70 Office table
71 Shade trees

DOWN
1 Warlike deity
2 Wolf
3 Monad
4 Zero
5 Hilo greeting
6 Modes of conduct
7 Speech
8 Knowledge
9 Make memos
10 Biblical prophet
11 Author's works
12 Spry
13 One who ties strings
21 Place query
22 Arrow poison
24 A Starr
26 Current units
27 Spleen
28 Winglike
29 One who trifles
31 Satan
33 Mythic monster
36 Spanish coin
37 British school
38 Saxon serf
40 Bridge
42 Potato state
45 Circus swing
48 Overacts
49 Kind of plays
51 Kind of train
52 Scent
53 Argentine ruler, once
55 Office worker
57 Dental metal
59 Sulk
60 Hero
61 Comic Crosby
62 Mine finds
64 Advanced degree: abbr.

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—THIS WEEK'S— HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: The big lesson comes from experience, not from reading textbooks. It's common sense that will be most useful.

Aries (March 21-April 19). Pay bills. You'll feel like doing that even less later. Work will be tough. You'll have to know the material cold.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). You may not get everything you want, but you can sure put up a good fight. A raise may have your name on it.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). Concentrate. Don't ask questions, and don't offer information unless specifically requested.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). A teammate could drop the ball. Be watching, so you can make the recovery. An especially irritating person could try to push you around.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). A stubborn friend will not budge. You might as well do whatever you want done by yourself. These days are more work than fun.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Study as much as possible. Your brain will be amazing. Looks like a friend wants to party in your private space.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Sell something to get the money you need. Studying will be fun, so do as much of it as possible.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Learn amazing things by working with a master craftsperson. If you don't know one, rent a video.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Keep unpleasant information to yourself. No use starting an ugly rumor. Save by getting something broken you can fix.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Get your team organized. A person who doesn't say much will have the best idea. You may feel restrained by rules and regulations. That's how it is, too.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). An assignment may threaten to dominate all your waking hours and then some, for days. Consult with a group of your friends. One of them may have a good idea.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). You're lucky, especially with travel, love, and higher education. So, take a challenge! Don't be intimidated by a popular person. Laugh at a joke, even if it's at your expense.

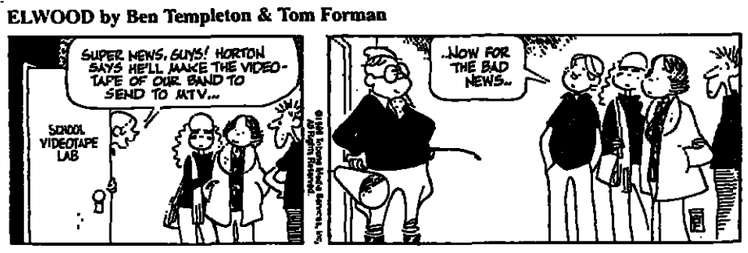
If You're Having a Birthday This Week: A group can help you get where you want to go. Do what you said, or you'll be haunted by unkept promises.

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PERKY & BEANZ by Russell Myers



ELWOOD by Ben Templeton & Tom Forman



CATFISH by Fred Wagner & Tom Cone



Bridge

Give One, Get Two
By Tannah Hirsch

Both vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠ A J 7 4 3
♡ J
◇ A K J 6
♣ 10 7 6

WEST
♠ 5 2
♡ A 10 7 5
◇ 10 9
♣ Q 9 8 5 3

EAST
♠ K Q 10 8 6
♡ 6 3 2
◇ 8 4 2
♣ 4 2

SOUTH
♠ 9
♡ K Q 9 8 4
◇ Q 7 5 3
♣ A K J

The bidding:

North	East	South	West
1♠	Pass	2♡	Pass
2♠	Pass	3◇	Pass
4◇	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♣	Pass	6◇	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Opening lead: Five of ♠

When there is a singleton in plain sight in the dummy, it is very difficult for a defender to refuse to win a trick in that suit. But bravery can have its rewards.

North-South reached a fair six-diamond slam on a natural auction. They were playing Key-Card Blackwood, so North's response of five clubs to the ace-asking four no trump showed zero or three aces, counting the king of trumps as an ace.

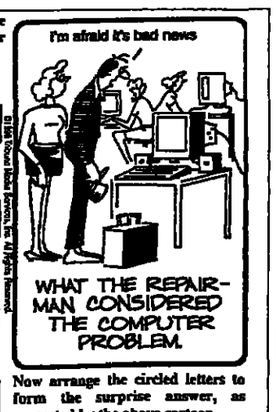
West led the five of spades, taken by dummy's ace. Declarer put the defense to the test immediately by running the jack of hearts. Had West taken this trick, declarer would have been home. It would have required just one ruff to set up the heart suit, and declarer would have been able to ruff one spade low and one with the queen. That would have yielded, in all, three trump tricks, three ruffs, three hearts, two clubs and the ace of spades.

However, West allowed the jack of hearts to hold the trick! Double dummy declarer could still scrape together 12 tricks (try it if you like), but at the table the task proved insurmountable. Declarer came to hand with a high club and led the king of hearts to ruff out West's ace, then tried the club finesse. When that lost to the queen, West could have settled matters there and then by giving East a club ruff. The spade return merely postponed declarer's agony. After ruffing in hand, South trumped a heart to set up the suit, cashed dummy's high diamonds and now had to lead a club. East's ruff was the setting trick.

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Unscramble these four words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

NICEW
DYLOM
RAWTEY
MAYLIF



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: ○○○○○○○○○

Answers: WINCE MOLDY WATERY FAMILY
Answer: What the repairman considered the computer problem — TERMINAL

WORD WISE

Q: Here's one for you: Are callus and callous related?

A: Callus is a noun meaning: a thicked patch of skin; a tissue mass that forms around a break in a bone and is converted into bone during healing; or soft tissue that forms over a cut in a plant.

Callous is an adjective meaning hardened or thickened, feeling no emotion or sympathy for others. I would say they're third cousins.

Words of Wisdom

The fruits of patience outweigh the bitterness of waiting.

• • •

Live with kindness today so that harsh words or actions do not haunt you tomorrow.

• • •

The strong in spirit are not afraid of being alone because they always have themselves to depend upon.

• • •

The wisest person is the one who claims to know the least.

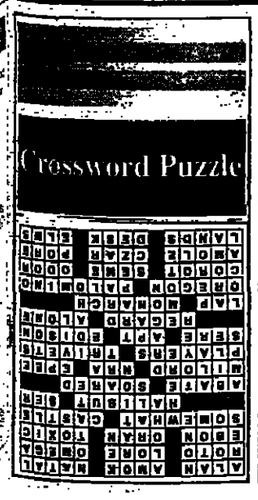
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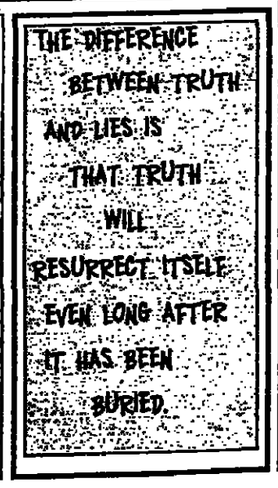
Success in business is yours if you work hard, but don't take anything too seriously.

• • •

Anyone who would cheat a foe would almost certainly cheat a friend.

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SLAPSTIX

Speaking without thinking is like shooting without taking aim.

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Le Jourdain
Supplément en français du Star

Le roi Hussein attendu dimanche en Arabie Saoudite



Pour sceller la réconciliation entre les deux pays, le roi Hussein de Jordanie se rendra dimanche en Arabie Saoudite où il rencontrera le roi Fahd (sur notre photo) et le prince Abdallah.
A l'occasion de cette visite, le roi Hussein devrait effectuer le petit pélerinage à La Mecque, comme en 1994. Mais cette année-là, il n'avait pas été reçu par le roi Fahd.
La brouille entre les deux pays remonte au mois d'août 1990, Ryad reprochant à Amman d'adopter une politique pro-irakienne après l'invasion du Koweït.
Le nouveau ministre jordanien de l'Information Marwan Moasher a déclaré mardi que cette rencontre illustrait la volonté politique de la Jordanie d'entretenir d'excellentes relations avec les pays arabes, et particulièrement les pays du Golfe.
Il a ajouté que le roi Hussein, invité par le président Hosni Moubarak, se rendrait prochainement en Egypte.

SELON MOI

Si le rêve permet à l'être humain de recevoir un message de son subconscient durant le sommeil, il prend une signification particulière quand il s'agit des jeunes filles orientales.

En dehors du contrôle permanent de la famille et loin de l'écrasant étau de la société, le rêve peut permettre aux jeunes filles de s'assurer que le mari tant attendu va bientôt arriver, ou bien de parler à un inconnu.

Il leur permet d'extérioriser leurs désirs cachés, sans censure, si ce n'est celle du système nerveux qui leur enlève le plaisir de profiter intégralement de leurs rêves en les découpant en petits morceaux.

Entre 15 et 30 ans, une jeune femme passe deux ans de son temps de sommeil physiologique à rêver. Et devinez de quoi? Bien évidemment de l'homme qu'elle ne peut approcher en plein jour et qui devient accessible *sous la protection des* saintes étoiles.

Dans son livre «L'Orient», Maupassant a écrit: *«Je n'aime que le rêve. Lui seul est bon, lui seul est doux. La réalité implacable me conduirait au suicide si le rêve ne me permettait d'attendre.»*

Ce qui intéresse les jeunes filles, étant donné que les rêves sont très rarement émis en langage décodé, c'est de comprendre la signification de ce qui a troublé leur sommeil.

Fort heureusement, les ouvrages spécialisés mélangeant croyances, mythes et analyses psychologiques ne manquent pas pour les y aider.

Jeune fille, si tu rêves que tes parents t'ont enfermée à la maison ou que le chef de famille veut t'égorger, ne crains rien. Cela signifie que tu vas bientôt te marier!

De même, si tu fais un rêve triste, sois contente, car tu sera bientôt comblée de bonheur. Ne sois pas déçue si tu rêves à un homme âgé: tu vas épouser un beau et jeune garçon. Et si cet homme est barbu, alors réjouis-toi: tu vas enfin épouser celui que tu aimes.

Par contre, évite de voir des souris ou des lapins dans tes rêves: ce sont les anges gardiens des femmes infidèles. Le chat, lui, te garantira la tendresse et si un cheval apparaît, cela signifie que ton cavalier blanc n'est pas loin et que tu peux déjà préparer les cartons d'invitation.

Gare à toi si tu perds tes cheveux dans tes rêves, car c'est le signe que ta pudeur s'en va. Et si tu te vois danser toute nue, tu peux avoir honte car cela signifie que tu es devenue une proie facile et qu'un scandale ne va pas tarder à éclater.

Ne crois pas que la vue de l'or soit de bonne augure car cela va te conduire à la ruine. Au contraire, la foudre t'annonce, elle, une meilleure situation financière.

Alors de quoi te plains-tu, jolie jeune fille? Tu as le droit de rêver en couleur, et en toute sécurité. Et en plus, sur catalogue! Si tu ne comprends pas la signification de tous tes rêves, des manuels t'apporteront avec fidélité et authenticité toutes les explications nécessaires.
Bonne nuit, et fais de beaux rêves.■

Suhail Al-Sweis

Politique intérieure

Kabariti forme un gouvernement de réformes

Choisi par le roi Hussein à la tête du nouveau gouvernement, Abdel Karim Kabariti, ancien ministre des Affaires étrangères, est chargé de procéder à un «changement radical» *dans la gestion des affaires du royaume. Il a déjà promis une plus grande liberté d'expression.*

Le nouveau Premier ministre Abdel Karim Kabariti a assuré que le nouveau gouvernement, malgré le fait qu'il inclue un grand nombre de députés, va apporter des changements radicaux et positifs, particulièrement au niveau de la démocratie et des libertés publiques dans le royaume.

Le gouvernement de Kabariti qui a été connu dimanche, ne répond peut-être pas aux aspirations de l'opinion publique qui souhaitait la présence de certains ministres, et l'absence d'autres, mais il reflète l'intention du gouvernement d'entamer des réformes à tous les niveaux.

«Le trio de ministres, Moustapha Shneikat, Kamal Nasser et Abdel Karim Doughmi est un signe du gouvernement quant à sa détermination de promouvoir les libertés publiques et la démocratie», constate Abdel Karim Kabariti, qui est lui même député à la chambre basse.

Moustapha Shneikat, ministre de l'Agriculture, est un membre de l'opposition à la chambre basse et un avocat des droits de l'homme. Kamal Nasser, ministre du Développement administratif, est le président du syndicat des avocats et le président des syndicats professionnels, et Karim Doughmi, ministre de la Justice, préside le comité judiciaire au Parlement.

La présence de ces trois ministres, connus pour leurs positions libérales et leurs luttes pour les droits de l'Homme et la promotion de la démocratie réélle en Jordanie, est un signe du gouvernement qui veut prouver qu'il souhaite sérieusement s'attaquer à ces sujets.

Depuis quelques mois, les manœuvres pour faire taire ceux qui dénonçaient une régression du processus démocratique entamé depuis 1989 se sont multipliées: attaques contre la presse, mésentente entre le gouvernement et les syndicats professionels et incarcération croissante de Jordaniens accusés d'avoir porté atteinte à la sécurité nationale.

Une plus grande liberté d'expression

La presse hebdomadaire, èn particulier, a été récemment soumise à de nombreuses attaques pour publication de fausses informations et de photographies obscènes.

Deux hebdomadaires, «Hawadeth al Sa'ah» et «al Bilad», ont été suspendus l'année dernière.

Or, M. Karabiti a déclaré qu'on ne pouvait pas nier que *«la presse hebdomadaire efait partie intégrante de la presse nationale»*.

Les journaux de l'opposition étaient aussi sous surveillance. Des dizaines de procès ont été intentés contre eux.

Le Premier ministre a promis que, dans le futur, la situation serait différente, non pas seulement pour la presse, mais aussi pour les syndicats professionels qui ont été attaqués pour leur opposition à la normalisation des relations avec Israël.

Au sujet des libertés publiques, Abdel Karim Karabiti a indiqué que la nomination au poste de ministre de l'Intérieur d'Awad Khleifat, réputé pour *être un homme droit n'étant impliqué* dans aucune affaire frauduleuse ou délictueuse, est un autre signe de la bonne volonté du gouvernement pour l'adoption d'une politique plus démocratique.

M.Kabariti n'a pas oublié les islamistes, qui ont un poids non-négligeable au niveau national.

Dans ses consultations avec les leaders du parti du Front islamique et des Frères musulmans, il a manifesté son envie de coopérer avec les islamistes, qui peuvent être considerés dans ce pays comme le courant islamique le plus modéré du monde.

Selon M.Kabariti, essayer de limiter le rôle politique des islamistes pourrait entraîner des mouvements extrémistes qui menaceraient la stabilité du royaume.

Les islamistes, eux, ne sont pas opposés à l'idee de participer au gouvernement de M.Kabariti dans le futur, mais ils préfèrent observer tout d'abord l'action de ce nouveau gouvernement avant de se décider. ■

Sae'da Kilani

Récolter les *«fruits de la paix»*

Avec l'annonce de la formation d'un nouveau gouvernement, le roi Hussein de Jordanie a souhaité un *«changement radical»*. Pour cela, il a choisi un gouvernement rajeuni, qui puisse *«répondre aux aspirations de la jeunesse.»*

Le nouveau Premier ministre a immédiatement répondu au roi qu'il tâcherait de *«libérer les énergies des jeunes et de les mettre au service de la Jordanie»*.

Cumulant les fonctions de ministre des Affaires étrangères, ministre de la défense et Premier ministre, Abdel Karim Kabariti, 46 ans, incarne l'image de la modernité.

Pour lui, la paix avec Israël est un fait accompli et il entend désormais s'attacher à la normalisation des relations entre les deux pays. Il s'est d'ailleurs engagé à faire recueillir à l'économie jordanienne *«les fruits de la paix.»*

Avec lui, la Jordanie devrait continuer à prendre ses distances avec l'Irak, comme elle l'a fait depuis quelques mois, notamment en réduisant ses exportations vers ce pays.

A plusieurs reprises, M.Kabariti a en effet vivement critiqué les dirigeants irakiens. Le roi lui-même a rappelé dimanche que la Jordanie soutenait le peuple irakien et s'efforcera *«de mettre fin à ses souffrances»*, ce qui prouve que les relations entre Bagdad et Amman risquent de se modifier complètement.

C'est en effet une des conditions sine-qua-non du rapprochement avec les différents pays du monde arabe entrepris par le roi.■



Le roi Hussein avec, à sa gauche, le nouveau Premier ministre jordanien, Abdel Karim Karabiti, et à sa droite le prince Hassan.

Arabisme

Le nationalisme arabe dans l'impasse

Du rejet de l'Occident à l'adhésion aux thèses socialistes, le nationalisme arabe a revêtu de nombreuses formes depuis la fin de l'occupation ottomane. Avec un seul point commun: elles ont toutes abouti à la même impasse.

«Comment, *une nation, caressée par l'Histoire, accepterait-elle sans mélancolie le sentiment insidieux de quitter le rang qui fut le sien?»* Ainsi Claude Imbert a décrit l'angoisse de la France (Le Point, 15- 2-1992), causée par le recul de son statut mondial. Pourtant, la France demeure une grande puissance qui possède la quatrième économie du monde.

Que peuvent bien dire les Arabes, héritiers d'une histoire également glorieuse, alors qu'ils se trouvent incapables de se distinguer dans aucun domaine, même dans celui du sport? Cette question domine, à juste titre, les débats des intellectuels arabes. Plusieurs formules sont proposées, qui émanent de diverses tendances politiques. Mais tous les discours sur ce sujet, tournent autour d'une question centrale: comment tenir tête à l'Occident?

La première réponse proposée par les nationalistes arabes était le rejet de l'Empire ottoman en faveur de relations étroites avec les grandes puissances européennes. Mais la chute de l'Empire ottoman n'a pas réalisé les rêves des nationalistes arabes, qui ont trouvé leur patrie non seulement dominée de nouveau par des puissances étrangères, mais en plus diviseée en plusieurs Etats. La domination européenne n'était cependant pas complètement négative.

Certes, elle a divisé la Vilayet de Syrie en quatre états, mais ce n'est que grâce à l'action militaire européenne que chacun de ces Etats est resté uni. En Jordanie, par exemple, sept états indépendants existaient, et aucun n'était capable d'unifier le pays, ou d'établir une administration centrale efficace.

Pourtant, l'incorporation des sociétés arabes dans l'économie mondiale, ajoutée aux difficultés liées à la création d'un appareil d'Etat, ont entraîné des déséquilibres sociaux qui ont rendu obsolètes les modes de vie de plusieurs couches sociales.

Les puissances coloniales ont profité de cette situation en favorisant certains groupes ethniques ou religieux, qui par conséquent, ont dominé les nouvelles économies nationales.

Le renversement de cet ordre politique, dans les années cinquante, avait ses origines dans les déséquilibres sociaux et économiques plutôt que dans des raisons idéologiques. Les activités économiques traditionnelles des petits rentiers et des artisans ont été dépassées par les nouveaux modes de production et de distribution. Incapables de gagner leur vie par les moyens traditionnels, les jeunes de ces couches sociale se sont inscrits dans l'émergente administration et l'armée de leurs états, toutes deux dominées par les élites qui étaient mieux placées pour profiter des relations avec les puissances coloniales.

La performance des nouveaux états n'était pas à la hauteur des ambitions des Arabes, qui croyaient que le renversement de la domination ottomane rendrait à leurs territoires arabes la prospérité perdue. Les analystes arabes tenaient les puissances coloniales responsables de tous les maux dont souffraient leurs pays.

L'émergence des nations du pétroie

Or, le renversement des élites aliiées des puissances coloniales a produit un conflit d'intérêts avec les puissances coloniales, ce qui a amené les nouveaux dirigeants arabes à chercher une alliance avec l'Union Soviétique.

Le message central du nationalisme arabe est devenu le rejet de l'Occident. Les dirigeants arabes qui maintenaient des relations cordiales avec l'Occident ont été traités de réactionnaires ou de traîtres.

Au fil du temps, les Etats progressistes arabes n'ont plus eu le vent en poupe. La défaite militaire cuisante dans la guerre de 1967, la dégradation économique, et l'échec des programmes socialistes étaient accompagnés par l'émergence des pays pétroliers conservateurs.

L'arrivée de la manne pétrolière a permis aux généraux progressistes socialistes de cacher leurs échecs économiques avec des programmes de couverture sociale, et de remplacer leurs tenues militaires par des habits civils taillés par les grandes maison de couture européennes. Pour y arriver, ils ont dû mettre fin à la guerre de propagande, et arrêter les attentats ayant pour but la déstabilisation des pays conservateurs.

Mais les états socialistes n'étaient pas les seuls à subir un échec économique, ni à profiter des subventions du pétrole. Partout dans le monde arabe, la mauvaise gestion était cachée par les revenus prove-nant de l'extérieur, ce qui a produit des économies dominées par des secteurs publics lourds et de moins en moins efficaces. Donc, la polarisation du monde arabe des années soi-xante, était remplacée par une situation bizarre, ou les distinctions entre *les états sont devenues brouillées*. Pourtant, les changements d'orientation politique au niveau gouvernemental étaient cachées des peuples par le maintien du discours nationaliste arabe des années soixante, y compris le message central du rejet de l'hégémonie occidentale.

Pas d'autre alternative possible

Enfin, l'implosion de l'Union Soviétique, et le discrédit du socialisme, a produit un nouvel ordre mondial, qui n'est pas très différent de celui qui dominait avant les mouvements indépendantistes.

Certes, il n'y aura pas de retour à la domination colonialiste. Mais la faiblesse économique et politique des états arabes ne leur permettra que de suivre les conseils des puissances mondiales, en conformité avec le proverbe arabe qui dit: *«La main que l'on ne peut pas casser, on l'embrasse et on prie Dieu pour qu'elle soit cassée»*.

Ces recommandations poussent les nations arabes vers la démocratie, et le retour de leurs économies dans le système économique mondial ou occidental. Il n'y a pas d'autres choix.

La sagesse d'après coup nous amène à la conclusion que la recherche d'un système alternatif n'a produit rien d'autre qu'une perte de temps.

La restructuration des économies arabes semble jusqu'à présent suivre le même rythme que lors des années quarante ou cinquante.

Les nouvelles élites économiques qui se sont formées sont étroitement liées au pouvoir politique. En même temps, le bouleversement économique a appauvri des couches sociales qui voient disparaître tout espoir d'ascension sociale.

Quant au discours politique, les intellectuels arabes continuent de diffuser le message laissant entendre que la domination occidentale est la cause de tous les maux du monde arabe et que le renversement de cette domination est la clef de la restauration du passé glorieux. C'est en effet beaucoup moins pénible que d'accepter d'assumer ses erreurs.

Plus ça change, plus c'est pareil. ■

Ali Kassay

Jordanie

Une situation économique mitigée

Si les chiffres boursiers ne sont pas bons en janvier, les meilleurs résultats à l'exportation enregistrés à la fin de l'année dernière laissent espérer une légère amélioration économique.

La bourse jordanienne a enregistré une légère baisse des cours et des volumes au mois de janvier. L'index des cours du Marché financier de Amman (MFA), la bourse du pays, a baissé de 2%, alors que le volumer global des actions vendues a chuté de 32,4% par rapport au mois de décembre.

Deux événements ont dominé les activité boursières du mois passé: la chute prévue des exportations vers l'Irak et l'anticipation de l'arrivée de fonds internationaux sur le marché boursier.

La décision du gouvernement jordanien de baisser les exportations autorisées vers l'Irak de 400 millions de dollars à 220 millions a touché plusieurs investisseurs sur le MFA, et particulièrement les actions industrielles qui représentent 26,7% des échanges en janvier.

En ce qui concerne les acheteurs étrangers, la bourse anticipe l'arrivée d'investisseurs étrangers qui veulent profiter de la nouvelle loi, plutôt libérale, leur permettant de placer leurs capitaux sur le MFA.

L'économie réelle de la Jordanie enregistre, elle, plutôt une légère amélioration.

Selon les derniers chiffres disponibles qui datent d'octobre 1995, les exportations de ma-tières premières sont en hausse, surtout grâce au phosphate. Comme le montre le tableau ci-dessous, plusieurs autres produits jordaniens partagent cet essor.

Pour ne pas se montrer trop optimiste, il faut noter que les exportations-clefs, comme les fruits et les légumes, ont chuté dans la même période.

Il est aussi important de noter que les importations sont toujours en hausse, et ce à un niveau beaucoup plus élevé que les exportations.

Au mois d'octobre 1995, les importations se montaient à 259 millions de dinars contre 230,2 en octobre 1994. Cela signifie que le commerce extérieur jordanien est encore bien loin de l'équilibre et que le déficit reste important

Les prévisions pour l'année 1996 sont plutôt optimistes. On s'attend à quelques investissements étrangers et à une légère amélioration du climat économique du pays.

Mais les problèmes et les soucis de 1995 restent sans solution radicale pour les mois à venir.

Et dans une telle situation, la diminution des exportations vers l'Irak ne peut être qu'un lourd fardeau. ■

Riad el Khouri
MEBA S.A.R.L.

Exportations jordaniennes (en millions de dinars)

	OCTOBRE 94	OCTOBRE 95
Phosphates	9,2	11,4
Huiles végétales et animales	7,6	10,1
Produits chimiques	21,9	33,2
Dont engrais	9,9	16,1
Produits divers manufacturés	7,8	10,2
TOTAL	81,2	93,9

C'est la vie

L'agenda français d'Amman

Peinture

«L'estampe de peintre en France», au Centre culturel français.
Une exposition qui réunit les œuvres de quatre artistes : Jean-Charles Blais, Hélène Delprat, Philippe Favier et Gérard Garouste.

Cinéma

«Lacombe Lucien», un film de Louis Malle.
Lundi 12 à 20h00 au Centre culturel français.

Communiqué publicitaire

Air France partenaire de la fondation Al Hussein

A l'occasion de la vente annuelle de charité organisée par la fondation Al Hussein s'occupant de la rééducation des personnes handicapées, Air France, partenaire principal de cette manifestation, a offert le premier prix de la loterie, un billet d'avion.

Un ticket aller-retour Paris/Amman a été remis au gagnant par le directeur régional d'Air France pour la Jordanie et l'Irak, M. Jean-Jacques Ledauphin.

Activities

yal Cultural Centre	661026/7
nerican Centre Library	820101
itish Council	636147/8
nch Cultural Centre	637009
oethe Institute	641993
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rkish Cultural Centre	639777
ya Arts Centre	665195
W.C.A	641793
W.M.A	664251
arat al Funun	643252
lia Art Gallery	639303
aladna Art Gallery	657132
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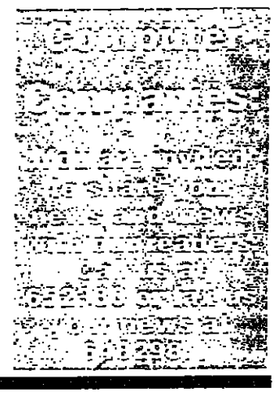
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THE STAR'S STATION COMPUTING & HIGH TECH

Edited by Zeid Nasser



Software publishers still lose $266 million in the Middle East, due to piracy:

Stepping up the battle

By Zeid Nasser
Special to The Star

AT ONE point, software piracy was the subject of the hour. Everyone in the computer hardware and software business was involved in debating the issue and there were a variety of opinions as to the means to combat this act of intellectual property theft in the Middle East.

Today, with some countries like Saudi Arabia, UAE and Egypt all enforcing their intellectual property rights laws; talk of piracy has become less in the region's media.

However, with a new alarming figure being released by Novell Middle East, the topic of piracy in the region is rising again.

According to Novell, international software companies are losing a sum of $266 million in the Middle East, due to piracy.

Compared to Europe, which is a software market tens of times bigger than ours, the humble losses of $30 to $100 million dollars make the $266 million in our region sound quite alarming.

The problem still exists and is in full force in certain countries.

In Egypt, a branch of the international body of software publishers that fights piracy has been established.

The Business Software Alliance BSA/Egypt Branch was announced last month in Cairo and aims to eradicate piracy in the Egyptian computer market.

The alliance is made up of Egyptian software publishers, representing this growing export industry for the country, who have managed to make Egypt the Arabic software development center of the region.

The BSA in Egypt will follow in the footsteps of its international organization by rallying computer hardware and software companies in the country and the region who do business in Egypt to battle piracy by lobbying with the government to enforce intellectual property rights, and educating the public.



Time is running out for the pirates

Many are convinced that international software publishers like Microsoft, Novell and Lotus are all concerned about protecting their products in what they call "the important markets in the region."

These are Saudi Arabia, Egypt and maybe a couple of Gulf states such as the UAE and Bahrain. To these companies, Middle East growth in software sales will come from these countries and that is were they would like to reserve their rights.

When it comes to smaller and less lucrative markets like Jordan, Syria, Lebanon; international software publishers would welcome copyright enforcement, but they don't seem to to be fighting hard for it.

In Egypt, the extreme push made by the local authorities to crack down on piracy, was mainly the reason why Microsoft and Novell set-up regional hubs in the country, rather than continuing to run Egypt operations from Dubai.

Yet, there are huge losses still being incurred in these and other Middle Eastern markets.

What are the prospects for proper software copyright enforcement in Jordan? Well, it seems that we will have to attend to this matter ourselves as the software giants of the region are still waging their battles in markets that count to them more than ours.

However, regardless of Jordan's small size as a consumer software market, we are making our presence felt in the area of software development. It is for this purpose that an organization such as the BSA should appear in Jordan: mainly to protect the rights of rising Jordanian software publishers.

It doesn't make sense to apply a law selectively, protecting only Jordanian software.

With Jordan gradually filling the GATT requirements, intellectual property rights will be actively enforced in all fields: music tapes, video tapes and computer software are all included.

For international software publishers, it means that Jordan may become a more attractive market for selling software. For Jordanian software publishers, it will mean protection they deserve and have waited long to achieve. ■

Internet Glossary for beginners

WITH COMPUTER users in Jordan waiting for full Internet access, we would like to present to you Internet terms which you may need to know when we go on-line.

The Internet Glossary below includes some of these terms:

Bandwidth
The information carrying capacity of the network.

BBS
Bulletin-board system. This posts public messages for a group of users.

FAQ
Frequently Asked Questions, summary section of a Usenet group.

FTP
File Transfer Protocol provides a simple way for users to transfer files to and from remote servers. data files are stored in a DOS-like directory structure with a short file name describing what is contained within the file. FTP can transfer files in two modes: binary or ASCII format.

Flame
An insulting message sent through the Internet.

Gopher
This is a way to store and transfer files in the Internet using full descriptions of files and directories to make transferring files more user-friendly. Gopher search utilities can be built into Web-browsers such as Mosaic and Netscape or can be a separate application as TurboGopher for the Macintosh.

Home Page
Opening screen of any Website

Hot Links
Features built in to Websites for automatic transition to other related Websites.

HTML
Hyper Text Mark-up Language. The standard test document format on the Internet. A subset of SGML, HTML version 3.0 is the latest version supported by Web browsers.

Hypertext
A link between one document and another allowing users to skip from one document to the next by clicking on a word.



IP
The Internet Protocol. standard addressing system used by the Internet.

IRC
Stands for Internet Relay Chat! or talking to Internet users via your keyboard in real time.

ITR
Internet Talk Radio.

MBone
Multicast bone. A new means to broadcast multicast packets over the Internet. The user's system must support IP multicasting to receive these broadcasts.

MIME
Multipurpose Internet Mail Extension.

Mosaic
A popular World Wide Web browser.

NetScape Navigator
A popular World Wide Web browser.

Node
Any device connected to the network.

POP
Point of presence

PPP
Point-to-point Protocol.

Telnet
Terminal emulation which gives you remote access to a computer on the Internet. You can use it as if it were your own desktop sitting in front of you.

Usenet
This is a part of the Internet dedicated to mainly text communication between user-groups including world news, debates, forums for discussion, help groups, etc.. You require a newsreader programme to access these groups and some may require membership.

UserId
UserID or account signature in an e-mail address eg. Zeid—Nasser@NETS.com.jo (Zeid—Nasser is the userID)

URL
Universal Resource Locator: the Website address such as http://www.arabia.com.

WWW
This stands for the World Wide Web which is a business oriented multimedia network of interlinked sites on the Internet. To access these sites you require a Web browser.

Website
A server on the World Wide Web.

News update

Apple still up for sale

● The fiasco at Apple Computer Inc, the company behind one of the top personal computer brands in the world, Macintosh, continues with the company being offered at around 50% of its worth one year ago.

Already, Chairman Spindler has left the company and is to be replaced by someone who will take Apple into the next stage of its life.

As of yet, nothing is final regarding Sun Microsystem's bid to takeover Apple, but industry analysts believe the deal will come through.

For Macintosh users and enthusiasts all over the world, whatever the conclusion, the Macintosh will live on. Under Sun, it may even move upmarket.

Novell, Corel finalize WordPerfect deal

Novell says it's reached a definitive agreement for Corel Corp. to buy Novell's WordPerfect word processor, Perfect Office application suite and QuattroPro spreadsheet and related software.

The cash, stock and licensing deal is worth about $197 million.

The deal will make Corel, an Ottawa-based developer of personal computer graphics and multimedia software, the second-largest independent vendor of personal productivity software for personal computers. Novell's stock was up one at 13 1/2 in Nasdaq trading today.

Ideal Group get Tandem

● Ideal Systems Co., part of the Ideal Group of companies, has recently been appointed as Tandem distributor in Jordan.

Tandem is a well-known name worldwide and in the Middle East in mid-range computer systems.

Ideal Systems is yet to make an official announcement.

We will include the full details on this development once it comes in.

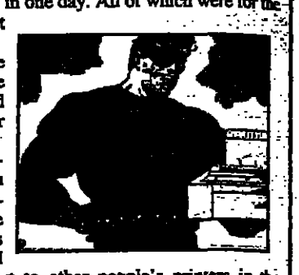
INTERFACE
BY ZEID NASSER

Where's the ink?

APPARENTLY, THERE was an ink crisis in the Jordanian printer market last week.

If your inkjet printer is a Hewlett-Packard or Lexmark, and you've been looking for ink cartridges, then you probably know what I'm talking about.

One manager of a computer shop in Wasfi Al Tal (Gardens) Street told me that he felt something was wrong when he sold 72 ink cartridges in one day. All of which were for the Hewlett-Packard Deskjet 500.



Of course, he told me to pay him a visit the next day when he would have received another shipment.

The suppliers of Lexmark printers in Jordan have been telling customers to wait while black ink cartridges become available and user's have had to resort to other people's printers in the meantime.

This makes you wonder about the efficiency of stock systems in computer companies in Jordan. Why should customers wait to be served? Why should they hear things like, "We still haven't received our order of that item"?

So, is the ink rush in Jordan over yet? It looks like supplies are arriving now at most shops, but it took around four days before people could replace their old, empty cartridges with brand new ones.

Like we said last week, this all falls to the benefit of encouraging more email and electronic faxing communications opposed to printed communications. Maybe if printer vendors looked at it like that, they wouldn't put there market at risk. ■

Jordanians go for on-line advertising

IT'S INTERESTING to note how well Jordanian companies are responding to the idea of advertising in cyberspace.

Already, the E-Commerce section on the NETS service is full of companies who are promoting their products by inclusion of folders with their name on them. Inside, you can find a mixture of promotional material such as the company profile, an explanation of services offered, and public responses to the company from NETS users.

Companies who are utilizing this on-line advertising opportunity include Al Sharqiyoun, Al Manhal Computer, Zeine Technological Applications, the Amman World Trade Center, Marriott, Special Systems Co., N.E.E.T., Ultra Electronics Center and others.

According to NETS, companies have responded well to the NETS offer, paying a monthly rate of JD 35.

With reach of around 600 people on the service, it's a 'captive audience' like NETS says.

The other main supplier of on-line services in Jordan, Access also offers a commercial section to which companies are responding well to.

From the looks of it, this infatuation with the idea of 'Internet' and 'On-line' has even hit businesses in this country who allocate advertising budgets carefully among newspapers and magazines.

Apparently, there is a future for on-line advertising in Jordan. Let's see what happens when we get real connection from Sprint soon. ■

Comic books reflect on Japanese culture

The comics also offer a rich fantasy world in a society where conformity is deemed a necessity, assertion of individual will is viewed as unacceptable and life itself is often eye-glazingly predictable

By Hilary E. MacGregor
LA Times-Washington Post News Service

TOKYO—Many Japanese look to Kosaku Shima to teach them the impeccable corporate etiquette that will take them to the top of the business world. When this young, hard-working, irresistibly debonair Hatsuba Electric worker was promoted to division chief in 1992, it made national headlines.

Many also look to Rintaro, a visionary, idealistic bureaucrat in the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, to teach them about the secret machinations of the nation's ministries and to share his insights on energy policy. Now, politicians in Washington want to hear what he has to say.

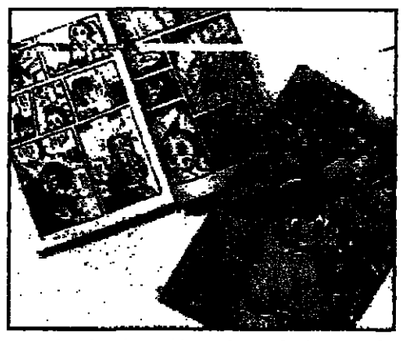
Rintaro and Shima boast social influence, salaries and celebrity that Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and Los Angeles Dodgers star Hideo Nomo would envy.

Never heard of Rintaro and Shima? That may be because they aren't real. They are characters in Japanese "manga," or comic books.

Manga are a billion-dollar industry. Sales of these fat comics, which go for about $3.50 each, account for close to a third of the total output of publishing houses here and amount to a whopping 553 million copies a year.

More than 500 categories of manga are released each month. Some playful commentators once estimated that the Japanese use more paper for the telephone-book-size comics than for toilet paper.

Many analysts say this medium is more influential than television or newspapers. Manga play a vital social function, supplying the flamboyant heroes that a highly controlled society can't produce, experts say.



The comics also offer a rich fantasy world in a society where conformity is deemed a necessity, assertion of individual will is viewed as unacceptable and life itself is often eye-glazingly predictable. All this, while gently reinforcing the values of working hard and supporting the status quo.

"Among Japanese media, manga are unquestionably the most powerful," says the creator of Rintaro, who uses the pen name Kuzu Haruo.

In their subject matter and approach, manga range from fantastic, such as Doraemon the robot cat, to realistic, such as businessman Shima Kosaku, to educational, such as the world-famous "Japan Inc.," a 1,000-page tome laying out the labyrinthine ways of the country's corporate economy.

Their stories often blend real news events with outlandish fantasies, unsayable words, undoable feats and—for a best seller—graphic sex scenes.

So ubiquitous is their cast of characters that for millions of manga maniacs the line between comics and reality often blurs. For them, the characters take their place alongside real people in everyday life, capturing headlines, offering testimonials for advertising and winning the public's love and respect.

"Manga made me what I am today," says Haruko Sato, 30, a self-proclaimed manga nerd. "After I read the manga on the French Revolution—liberty, equality, fraternity and all that—I knew what I wanted to do."

"I was 13, and I thought, 'Wow!'" says Sato, who works for an international think tank on Japanese-European relations.

Cultural critics call manga Japan's postwar literature, its social commentary and a repository for its most creative minds. They also call them a window into the Japanese psyche, shedding light on what motivates, inspires and titillates readers.

Universities teach manga, psychologists analyze them and there is even a museum in Osaka to memorialize them.

Professor Tomofusa Kure lectures on manga at Tokyo Rika University, teaching students to study these graphic novels the way American students study classic literature.

To him, manga are a unique literary form that has thrived untainted by foreign influences.

Although comics existed before World War II, they were considered a children's medium. But amid Japan's horrible postwar poverty, today's manga industry was born.

"After the war, there was a big gap between what the Japanese people wanted and what they had," says Hiromichi Moteki, a private publisher with a passion for manga. "Movies were too expensive to make, but manga allow you to make a high-quality product cheaply."

Manga are compact and entertaining and require little concentration. Publishers also throw in large doses of porn to woo readers: Huge, sexually insatiable white women are often the subject of sexual attentions from mighty Japanese manga heroes.

And as the manga generation began to reach top posts in the Education Ministry, a society-wide transformation in attitudes occurred, elevating the comics from an entertainment medium to an educational tool.

"While people are laughing at manga, they are also unconsciously learning how to behave and what not to do," says Dr. Masahiko Ito, a pediatrician who co-wrote a book psychoanalyzing one of Japan's most famous manga heroes.

Why do comic books exert such influence in Japan? Society's demands here may often exact such a steep psychological price from its members that manga can be essential in maintaining a mental balance, experts say. ■

US delays Cyprus policy initiative

By Thomas W. Lippman
LA Times-Washington Post News Service

WASHINGTON—One of the Clinton administration's most ambitious foreign policy goals—settlement of the decades-old dispute over Cyprus—has run aground on a barren rock in the Aegean Sea.

When Greek and Turkish warships faced off last week to enforce rival claims to sovereignty over a 10-acre islet inhabited only by feral goats, administration officials shelved plans to begin this month what they had billed as a major initiative to resolve one of Europe's thorniest problems.

Assistant Secretary of State Richard C. Holbrooke had planned to go to the region next week, his last full week in office, to begin an all-out US diplomatic effort to solve the Cyprus issue, which Holbrooke regards as a threat to the stability of all southern Europe.

But after the territorial dispute over the islet blew up into near-war last week, Holbrooke revised his mission into a tension-defusing effort that would keep the way open for a Cyprus initiative later this year. Then Monday, he scrapped the trip altogether when Greece told him he would not be welcome, apparently because Athens thinks Washington sided with Ankara last week.

The Greek decision was a setback for Holbrooke and other Clinton administration officials, who had promised a major effort to unravel the Cyprus problem in 1996.

"We are committed to a major effort on Cyprus this year," Holbrooke said last week.

That remains the official policy. If anything, according to State Department officials, the confrontation last week between two NATO allies long divided by the Cyprus dispute only makes it more urgent to find a solution.

This announced intention to settle a volatile issue that has long defied the best efforts of the United Nations, various European intermediaries and US administrations reflects the administration's new-found foreign policy confidence.

Criticized during its first two years for perceived indecision and inconsistency in foreign policy, the administration now says it has jettisoned its earlier commitment to multilateralism in world affairs in favor of the muscular exercise of US leadership. Officials date the transformation to last summer, when President Clinton finally decided to seize the initiative in Bosnia, leading to Holbrooke's brokering of the Dayton peace agreement in the fall.

Holbrooke is leaving his post 21 February to return to private business in New York. Much of his tenure as the administration's top official for European affairs was consumed by the quest for peace in Bosnia, but Holbrooke always said he viewed a Cyprus settlement as the key to ensuring stability and security in southern Europe and the Mediterranean.

Cyprus, an island is very small in size combined with about 730,000 residents, has been divided by barbed wire and barbed words into Greek-speaking and Turkish-speaking sectors ever since Turkish troops landed in 1974.

To the United Nations and to every country except Turkey, there is only one Cyprus, represented by the Greek-speaking government of President Glafcos Clerides. Ankara recognizes the Turkish-dominated northern third of the island as a sovereign state.

The issue has long inflamed passions in Greece and Turkey, and torn at NATO's unity. Largely at Holbrooke's urging, the administration proclaimed a Cyprus settlement one of its highest foreign policy priorities this year, along with a peace agreement between Israel and Syria.

With Holbrooke's departure, the US point man in this effort will be New York lawyer Richard Beattie, Clinton's part-time special envoy to Cyprus. But State Department officials said they expect the forceful, high-profile Holbrooke to be involved at least informally, assuming the effort survives the recent setacks. ■



Tourism in Cyprus, one of its biggest industries, is likely to be effected by such skirmishes between the Turks and the Greeks